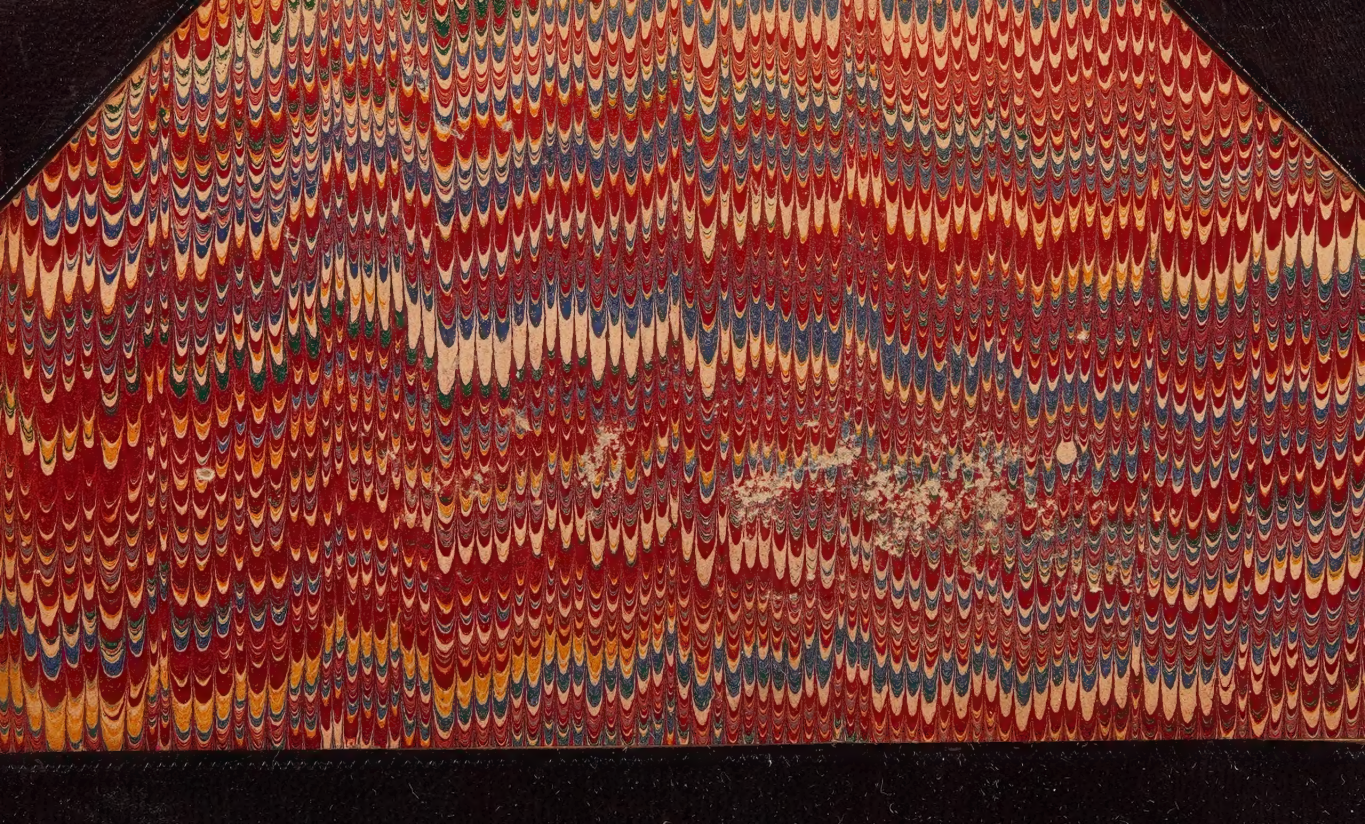

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RATHLYNN.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"THE SAXON IN IRELAND."

"Oh, how full of briars is this work-a-day world!"
AS YOU LIKE IT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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RATHLYNN.

CHAPTER I.

"Gar saddle me the bonny black,
Gar saddle soon, and get him ready,
For I will down the Gatehope slack,
And all to please my bonnie ladye."

Ballad.

BEFORE starting for Belfast on my unwelcome mission, I called upon Bridget Cooney that very evening. I did not feel quite comfortable to leave the family at Ballybog, even for the few days I should be absent, totally unprotected; and I well knew that if any

project was in agitation Bridget would know something at least about it.

When I tapped at the door of the cottage I fancied I heard voices within, but when Bridget, after a little delay, opened it, I found no one there but herself.

"Banaght Dheah in shoh,"* said I, in Irish, as I entered.

"And may the Lord be with you, avouchal," said she, as she placed a stool for me near the fire. And what is it that brings your honor here the dark night? Sure, is it a dish of discoorse you would have with me?"

"Yes, Bridget—that is, if you are quite alone."

"And why not? Don't I live all alone by myself, without a mankind to

* "The blessing of God be here."

do a hand's turn for me, the worse luck! Who should there be here, I wonder?"

"I fancied I heard voices within as I stood at the door."

"Maybe it was the good folks—they love the old Rath out yonder, and many's the time I hear them shouting and singing of a dark night as the blast sweeps over the black bog above us."

"Are you afraid of them, Bridget?"

"Faith, then, and they are not to be vexed; but I've got a gospel composed by Father Dan of Roscroe round my neck, sewed in this little red bag."

"Which protects you, I suppose?"

"Throth, they never hurt me, the creatures!"

"But to business, Bridget." And I placed the promised donation in her hand. "Is there anything in the wind besides the fairies?"

"Husth!" said she, lifting up her finger—"remember you have to cross the bog to-night. Anything going on, is it? Well—no—not altogether,"—and she played with the little leathern money-bag in her hand—"and yet there is something, by reason that young Fitzpatrick left home on a sudden with his foster-brother, Tom Clancey, only yesterday, and they were seen together under the old walls of Donegal Castle late last night with two other men."

"And what does that portend?"

"I cannot say—but they are watched, and you shall know."

"Has this young man," said I, "any

designs upon the family at Ballybog—and if so, what are they?"

"I cannot say; but he's a wild spalpeen—bad cess to him!—if there's mischief going on, he's always to the fore. Those Donovans must look well to that fellow Thady Houlagan. He was on the sly speaking with Miss Florence at the waterfall a few mornings ago; and, sure, it's no good will she has to the young woman at Ballybog—thanks to your honor, I'm thinking."

"How thanks to me? I never gave her cause to——"

"Never mind that—truth is truth. The young man at the Mount has set his mind on having the young woman at Ballybog, and the young lady at the Mount has made up her mind to

have you; or, if that is not to be, nobody else shall—least of all this Mary Donovan. And so, as you are all pulling different ways, the rope is sure to break at last, and mischief will come of it."

"It may be so—but may I depend on you, Bridget? Will you let me know all that is going on?—and, remember, if money is wanted, it is ready."

"Nothing like it—it gets to the bottom of all schaming (scheming)—it makes friends—ruins enemies—it opens all doors wide, and is a key to every lock. You may depend upon me—I have those who will do my bidding, and he's not a wise man that thinks to hide his goings-in and his comings-out from Bridget Cooney."

"Then may I safely leave the country for two days?"

"Yes, for double that. They cannot move a step and I not know it. And where is it your honour is going to, that I may send to you if necessary?"

"No matter where. I shall be back again in two or three days, if, indeed, I leave at all."

I was willing to purchase all Bridget's information, but had no intention of giving her my confidence, further than I could avoid it. And so we parted.

I lost no time in proceeding on my mission. I rode a capital Galloway mare, spirited, high-bred, and active, with a capability of endurance almost incredible. I had recently purchased her at Londonderry, after she had won a ten miles' trotting-match in the first-rate style, and though the price I gave for her to a Dumfriesshire laird was

much commented on at the time, yet I had never reason to repent my bargain. She was called "Diamond," and indeed, proved to be one of the first water, and so much did I appreciate her good qualities, that no sum would have tempted me to part with her. Dan McBride had the charge of her, and very proud the poor fellow was; and having, when a boy, been employed with his father in the stables of a sporting lord, in the adjoining county, he was well up to his business, and always turned her out in good style.

The country I passed through from Mullikeen to Lifford and Strabane, had all the usual characteristics of Donegal scenery, a constant succession of the dreary and the picturesque. Squalid poverty, laziness, and an almost total

neglect of Nature's bounties, were everywhere visible, and the Saxon who ventures into these remote districts, can scarcely believe the state of human misery and degradation before him to be real. There seems to be no *effort* on the part of these people to better their condition—they seem not only contented, but they even prefer to exist in a state of abject barbarism, of which the whole world, I do believe, affords few examples.

Often as I cast my eyes upon a lovely valley, open to the sun, watered by a copious stream, and spreading out its deep alluvial lands and fertile bottoms as far as the eye could reach, and then observed no signs of cultivation, no fences, no roads for occupation, no farm-houses, no decent cottages, no shelter-

ing woods, I have lifted up my hands in wonder and disgust, and thought how it was that, where God had done so much, man had done so little.

"The people are not deserving of such a country," I on one occasion exclaimed aloud, "and the sooner they emigrate the better."

I was at this moment riding along a grassy bridle-road, and my head was turned as I gazed upon a lovely valley to my left, so that I did not perceive a person on a stout horse close at my elbow.

"Good even to you kindly," said he; "as we seem to be going the same way, I have taken the liberty of joining you."

I started, and turned round. It was a priest. He was tall and stout, had

much Hibernian fun in the twinkle of his eye, not unmixed with a considerable degree of sagacity.

"You admire our country," said he, "more than our people, if I may judge by the expression you let fall just as I rode up."

"You are right, sir, I do so, and not without reason."

"Then you conceive the people to blame, and attribute this state of things to them?"

"Not to the common people alone—I think the heads of the people, both clerical and lay, will have a heavy account to render some day."

"I agree with you so far as the lay proprietors are concerned — we clergy have nothing to do with it. We are powerless."

"Probably so," said I, "as to the actual management of the lands; but if the people were educated, and habits of neatness and industry were early instilled by those who are their natural instructors, this state of things could not be."

"How can the clergy teach them neatness and industry, since their province does not extend beyond spiritual matters? We would make and keep them good Catholics—beyond this we have no mission."

"But cleanliness is next to godliness—a man would not be a jot the worse Catholic, if he kept his house decent and his person clean, and was instructed in the common rudiments of education!"

"In reading the Scriptures, I suppose, and in exercising private judgment?"

"Reading the Bible certainly. I am no advocate for half-educated men exercising their private judgment too freely on matters they cannot thoroughly understand."

"But how can you prevent it?" said he. "Education, in your sense of the word, only opens the flood-gates to every species of social disorder. It fosters the sin of presumption—it creates a spirit of opposition to institutions, however honoured, ancient, or useful. It is a spiritual government only that can control mankind."

"But let us," I rejoined, "judge causes from their effects. Compare Donegal with Antrim or Down. The former is under priestly influence and government, the two latter are comparatively well-educated districts, where the Word of

God is free and the people's thoughts are unfettered. In which of these is the most wealth, the most industry, the most cleanliness, the most enterprise, and, consequently, the greater amount of comfort and happiness?"

"But stay, sir—carry your comparison further. In those eastern counties there is no union of feeling nor of sentiment—sects of every shade of absurdity rise, flourish, and decay like mushrooms; there is no faith, no Church-government, no discipline—every one does just that which seems good in his own eyes—schisms and heresies abound—and that unity which alone can make a people really religious is nowhere to be found. Mammon is the only god really worshipped. But when the Catholic Church has the pre-eminence, these things are not so.

The path to heaven is clearly marked out; there is no doubt—no bewilderment; resting in the faith of their forefathers, the people are satisfied and happy, and if they have more than their share of the miseries of this world, they have more certain, more holy, more established hopes in the world to come."

The difference in our feelings and opinions seemed so wide that, as by mutual consent, we rode forward for a considerable distance in silence.

"But, sir," resumed I, "is all this unity in spiritual matters you so well describe, incompatible with industry and social comfort, or how is it an excuse for the barbarism of the people and the total neglect of the lands?"

"But our vocation is not with the bodies of the people, nor yet with the state of the

ands—we look to their souls only—their welfare in eternity is of far more importance than their temporal prosperity. It is no care of ours either to promote or to impede what you would term their civilization, as applied to mere worldly matters. Civilization does not make them better Christians—too often the contrary. The questions you raise, and the comparisons you draw, are altogether foreign to the subject in dispute. The spiritual and temporal conditions of states or districts are not in any way dependent on each other. A decent dwelling, a clean person, and fine clothing have no connection whatever with true Christianity. The early Christians, and many of the great Fathers of the Church, were habituated to every privation, and had not even where to lay their heads. As to

the social habits of the people—the wretchedness you talk so much of, and their neglect of the gifts Nature has bestowed upon them—all this, sir, is the consequence of a bad system, under which this country has laboured for a long series of years. How can you expect a man to be industrious, when his very industry exposes him to wrong and robbery. The landlords grant no leases when they can avoid it, and if a farmer improves his lands, he well knows his rent will be increased or another man put in his place to reap the fruit of his labours. And so it is that all the spirit of enterprise and emulation dies away—the poor tenant feels the incubus of injustice on his shoulders; he lives on without hope; he feels it of no use to labour for more than a bare existence;

and so sinks necessarily and naturally into that abject state in which you find him. And what can the priests do? The majority of the landed proprietors are Protestants; we have no influence with them; our remonstrances would be treated with contempt; and our preaching against this state of things would be construed into disloyalty, if not rebellion."

I now found that, though agreeing in the latter part of his speech, further discussion was useless, and I suffered the subject to drop, only remarking that "temporal blessings and comforts always seemed in a greater degree to attend those countries where perfect freedom of thought and action were allowed."

My new acquaintance and I parted

at Strabane, a town on the frontier of the desert, if I may so call it, and where the principle I had been advocating first began to display its effects in increased industry and bustle, though not much could as yet be said as to cleanliness and comfort. But as I advanced eastwards beyond the Sperrin Mountains, a higher degree of cultivation became apparent, and even as I rode through the wilder districts of Tyrone, comfortable farm-houses, well-fenced lands, and respectable out-buildings were ever and anon to be seen, causing to my English eye a species of satisfaction it had not known for some time.

As I rode along, skirting the base of the lofty Slieve Gallion to Randall's Town, the country became occasionally

picturesque, and on passing the domain of Shane Castle, the ancient seat of the O'Niels, I was much pleased with the views of that inland sea Lough Neagh, and the venerable woods that for miles seemed to skirt its shores. Sleeping at Antrim, so well known in Irish history, I reached Belfast in good time on the following day, and lost no time in executing my commission.

I found that a vessel for Halifax, in Nova Scotia, was to call at Belfast in about three weeks, and having ascertained all particulars from the agents, and arranged for suitable berths, I devoted the remainder of the day to inspecting this fine and thriving city.

After so long a sojourn in the wild fastnesses of Donegal, it was, indeed, a relief to me once more to pace paved

streets, to gaze into the shops, and to see around me all the comforts and luxuries of civilized life, and to hear once more the busy hum of men. But all this did not allure me to stay one moment longer than was necessary to refresh my horse, for I had a feverish anxiety and restlessness about me I could scarcely account for, and which urged my speedy departure.

The day broke serene and frosty, as I set my face westward, and in the evening of the third day I found myself entering the gate of Rathlynn, after a propitious journey performed with unusual rapidity, though with perfect ease and safety.

CHAPTER II.

"But, brother, I can tell you strange news,
That you yet dreamed not of."
"*Much Ado about Nothing.*"

GIVING my mare to Dan with strict injunctions to prepare her for another start, if necessary, I listened to the congratulations of Mrs. Doran and Nelly on my safe return with some impatience, for though anxious, I was almost afraid to ask whether anything particular had occurred since my departure.

"Nothing new," said Mrs. Doran, in

answer to my inquiries, "except that the Colonel from Doonore, his son and two daughters, came down the Lough to take you back with them, as they said for a day or two. Sure they are all so anxious to have your honor with them, that it's little Nelly and I will see of you at your own blessed home anyhow, and we too making it all so comfortable. We find the house very lonesome when the master is so much away."

"I daresay you do, Mrs. Doran, but it cannot be helped."

"Well—well, when you are all married snug and disposed of, there will not be so much looking after you then. Sure one of them Miss D'Arcies would make a nice little comfortable wife, they are both so pretty and so full of their

fun. Oh! if you had heard how they did go on inquiring about how you lived, and who you saw, and whether you were doing much in the farming way on the side of the estate next the Mount—do you think they are jealous of Miss Fitzpatrick?"

"I should think not, there should be no jealousy where no attention is paid to any one exclusively, and you know, Mrs. Doran, I keep very much to myself."

Mrs. Doran returned no answer to my query, beyond a quiet smile; but went at once to prepare some refreshment, which speedily appeared, and to which ample justice was done. "I forgot to say that a gorsoon came with a note yesterday," said Mrs. Doran, as she removed the tray; "but he would not say where he came from, but only swore by

St. Bridget—the wicked creature that he was—that you'd be sorry you were not at home."

"By St. Bridget!" repeated I, musing. The name at once flashed upon my mind, the note was from Bridget Cooney, and there was something in the wind.

Mrs. Doran placed it in my hand, observing, "It is better to eat before people read letters. The stroke of a pen has spoiled many a good dinner." The note ran thus, and Mrs. Doran was right, it would certainly have spoiled my dinner,—"They know you are gone —there is not a minute to lose, early or late come here at once as you wish well to you know who."

It was written in a good bold hand, certainly not Bridget's.

Not one moment did I lose, but

taking my hat, and folding my cloak around me, I hastily left the house and pursued a short cut that led over the bog to the lonely cottage on the burn side. It was nearly dark, the snow was on the ground, and the stars above gave a dim but uncertain gleam. I hurried on, slipping and frequently falling as I leaped from tussock to tussock, and at length gained a firmer path which led directly to the cottage.

I listened at the door before entering, and though no light was visible from without, I felt certain that the cosherer was within, and that some one was with her, as I could distinctly hear the low murmur of voices. No time, however, was to be lost. I knocked, raised the latch and entered.

As usual, Bridget was on her low

seat near the fire; the turfs had not been replenished, and the hot embers shed a dim glow over the room. "God save all here!" I exclaimed, looking curiously around.

"God save you, kindly," replied the woman, not raising her face—"it's late you've come, Mr. Wyville, but betther late than never."

"And whom have you with you, Bridget Cooney?"

"The devil a cratur!" replied she, looking up, and putting her finger on her mouth; "but if you'll please to just go out on the road and see if Larry Lanigan is about, your honor would obleege me."

I did as I was bid, so far as to leave the house, but I did not go upon the road at all, but conccaled myself behind

the western angle of the building, where nothing could escape me. Suddenly a figure emerged close by, wrapt up in one of the common cloaks of the country, and the costume was altogether not that of a lady. But the figure and the stately step could not deceive me—I felt sure it was Florence Fitzpatrick! What could she be doing there at such an hour?

I re-entered the cabin.

"Who was your visitor?" said I, in a tone requiring a true answer.

"Don't ask, and then I shall tell no lies. If your honor thinks it is herself, why, I don't tell you so."

"Just as I thought—what can have brought her here at such a time in the evening?"

"Much the same, dear, that brought you, I'll give bail for that."

"Is there any one here now?—any one behind the turf-rick, Bridget?—you understand?"

"The turf-rick, is it? Not a human cretur—look for yourself. Sorra a one is there between these four walls with us besides our ownselves."

I examined the room, and found we were alone.

"Well, here I am, in obedience to your note, what is the matter? Anything wrong at Ballybog?"

Bridget left her seat, and secured the door.

"Bad cess to that Archie Fitzpatrick!" said she, reseating herself; "for once in his life he has got the start of me, and to put the dark veil the better over my eyes, here every evening comes that colleen from the Mount, discoorsing

me soft, and with a mouthful o' nothing, and all to make me think naught was a-stirring at Ballybog! And didn't she say that her brother was over in Dublin, and pretend she did not know you were away, and didn't she pump me to know what we thought about matters?—but the omma-dawn! she might as well have tried to pump water out of a mile-stone. Oh! hadn't she hit upon a plan!—the flush on her skin, and the dark flash of her eye showed it—and then she said she hated you, and then the poor thing wept as if her heart would break, and then she said that low creature at Ballybog should soon know what it was to stand in the way of a Fitzpatrick. Oh! Mr. Wyville, is not this jealousy strong as death? Did she not stand before me proud and re-

vengeful as a fallen angel, careless of her own ruin, if she could only ruin her rival! You see, sir, she could play all this off before me, for I had nursed her, and she always bared her heart to me in a way she would not to her own mother."

"All this is very distressing, Bridget," said I; "I have given Miss Fitzpatrick no cause for such conduct, and I am sure Miss Donovan is even more innocent of giving her any offence than I am."

"Mary Donovan stands in the way of her pride and her love, and I do believe she loves you as a Milesian lady alone can love."

"But the plan you said she had hit upon—what was that?"

"She never told me—their goings on were kept secret from me for a time,

when in comes a friend, and tells me a thing or two, and sure I was ready to kick my own shadow at being so deceived. But it will do them no good, it only makes me the more eager to circuminvent 'em."

"Circumvent them in what?"

"Sure your honor's not such a silly bochach as not to know what I mane —the Sligo boys are come down, and by this time the nest is robbed of the young one—the Heavens protect the poor colleen dhass!"

"Has this Archibald Fitzpatrick," said I, "dared to touch a hair of that young lady's head? Surely, Bridget Cooney, you won't repeat this as truth? He knows better—he dare not do it!"

"Don't look so crooked at me, man alive—*I* did not do it."

"But you promised I should be made aware of anything that threatened—I fear you are bought by the highest bidder—I was a fool to trust you, or any Celt that ever was born. Good night!"

I was leaving the room, when she held up the key in her hand, and motioned to me to sit down again.

"Is it reason you'd hear, alanna, or would you break your own head against the wall? Listen to me, or the colleen is lost! I to the fore, and all may be well yet. Are friends as plenty as boulder stones, that you play the buckeen Sassenach with me, and boil up like the steam off a kettle? Listen to reason, man alive, and never fear; I'll not sell the pass on you, and if you take my advice you'll not lose this 'dawnshee thing' of yours after all."

"But you serve two masters, Bridget; what had Miss Fitzpatrick to say to you at this time of night, and why was it necessary to lend her your cloak and to pass her out so quietly?"

"Was it likely the creatur would wish to meet you, and she knowing the game that was playing against you? And is it serving two masters I am? The Holy Virgin be my witness, there is not the man or the woman living that can say Bridget Cooney is their humble servant. It's often I'm master and mistress too, and it's little ye'd all do without me."

"But," said I, fearing the woman's volubility might, as is usual, drive her into a passion, "let us to business—I do trust you, and I will take your advice, only let me know what has

happened. I will go up to Ballybog before sunrise."

"You must go *now*, and not a moment to be lost."

"Now! what can have happened?—tell me at once!"

"Well then—it's a clear case of seduction, or abduction as *we* call it—this young Archie—the devil's limb that he is!—has taken the colleen away, and means to have her all to himself anyhow. Sure, it's the black news I have for your honor this day."

I started from my seat, and rushed to the door with the intention of forcing my way through it. In one moment was the whole case revealed to me, and poor Mary Donovan was to be made the victim of a custom as foul as it was barbarous and cruel.

"Stay one moment," said Bridget, "and I will tell you that that will sarve you well. It may be they did not do it last night, and I rather think that to-night was fixed."

"Why to-night?"

"Because Miss Florence was here 'connoitering, and they did not expect you back so soon. She's as bad as her brother, or worse, and will never rest till that young woman is out of her way. She said as much."

"But she does not wish her brother to marry Miss Donovan—she says that it would be the ruin of the family."

"This is all changed," replied Bridget, "she and he are one; they seem now to care nothing about the Corrigans—it's a mystery to me, bad cess to them!—

but depend upon it the whole pack of the Fitzpatricks are in full cry on the same scent."

"The father?"

"Ay, and mother too—"

"Impossible!"

"It's as true as that the Rock o' Cashel once belonged to the Devil's Bit."

I merely delayed until I had got full instructions from Bridget as to my best mode of proceeding, and a token to a man who was one of the very party employed in this deed of violence and crime.

"He's a cleaveen o' mine," said the midwife, "and looks for a share of my turf-rick when the Lord plazes to take me, and sure he's a handy boy, and it was I put him into the business out o' regard to your honor and the colleen

beg, both of ye, for I don't like the thing, and wash my hands of it."

"But what can I say to him, and how do I know he will attend to my wishes?"

"Be—because he was here and I insinsed him, and told him it was you had the ready hand and the open purse, and the stout heart, and would stand by him if he stood by you. Heaven knows it's no good will we any of us have to those Fitzpatricks, and as Phil will not be sworn to sacresy, it's only right he should serve the best master.

"And where is the party gone?"

"I cannot tell, nor can I learn who is the captain."

"Young Fitzpatrick, I suppose? He will of course be there."

"Not so sure—it is an awkward game they are playing, and he would not like to appear at first. As she has no friends, he may think the matter will not be noticed, and they will contrive, if they can, some means to keep you quiet. It was the bad luck that brought you here, and she to see you. You must not return to Rathlynn, anyhow. Oh, murther!—this very minute you are not safe. I hear people coming down the road."

"Only one moment more, Bridget, and I will go—where shall I see Phil, and when?"

"In the court-yard of the ould Castle of Donegal to-morrow night as the clock chimes twelve."

"And will you go yourself," said I, "to Rathlynn, and send the two boys

up the Lough in the boat, with some clothes that Mrs. Doran will pack, and my pistols, and tell Larry Lanigan to bring the mare down to McNamara's Ford, where I will wait till he comes. Be speedy."

"I'll not waste a minute; and may the Lord and all the saints prosper your honour, and give you the victory over them devil's cubs!—Amen."

And with this blessing Bridget opened a small door near the fireplace, which was well concealed by a piece of green baize hanging, and I quietly stole out into the dark abyss beyond. The whole operation was so noiselessly performed, that not even a listener could have detected anything.

It was so dark that I paused to recover myself. The turbid waters of

the river were heard rushing along close below me, and the scream of ill-omened birds mingled wildly with the blast. I thought of poor Mary Donovan, and of the villains in whose power she probably was, and my blood boiled with indignation and horror.

At this moment a light flashed upon the road above me, and I crept quietly along the outer side of the wall of the haggard, to a spot where I could see what was going on, myself unobserved. A female and three men, one holding a pony by the reins, stood on the road not far from the door of the hut. In the female I had no difficulty in recognizing my once fair friend Florence, but the men were unknown to me.

"Are you sure he is in the cabin?" questioned the one who held the pony.

"Quite sure," said Florence; and as she turned her face towards me I saw it was deadly pale—"quite sure; but remember your promise—you are sworn not to hurt a hair of his head."

"But if he resists?" said another—"what then?"

"Only this," replied she, "that, come what will, if you hurt one hair of his head I'll turn approver and hang you all, as you know I can do."

"Then we will wait here till he comes out," said the first speaker, "and seize him in the dark."

"Better do so than run any risk," replied Florence, as, mounting her pony, she galloped swiftly up the hill.

At this moment the light was extinguished, and soon after the cottage-door was opened and out sallied the cosherer

on her errand, as I supposed, to Rathlynn. As she neared the spot where I stood sheltered by the wall, one of the men approached her, and bade her stop.

"And what for am I to stop, ye tools of the devil?" said she, pushing on.

"Sure, Mrs. Cooney, and it's you we would treat with respect anyhow: it was only to ask if the Sassenach is wid you in the house, as we want to spake a few words wid him."

"Now, Corney Brady," replied she, "is it that you and the two fools with you want to be kilt entirely and altogether, that you would face that young foreigner, that you well know can bate the whole country, and no trouble to him? He *has* been here with a pocketful of pistols, and a long sword hid in his shillelagh, and if I had ten stout

boys at my back, it's not I that would throw an angry look at him—bating the foul word. So go home and save your lives, you vagabones!"

"Is he in your cabin, Mrs. Cooney?" doggedly inquired the stoutest of the party.

"Go and see, you own shuck, you, and if you ever set eyes on your wife again, Corney, or spake another word to the childer, may the flood in the river there sweep me out to sea, or the top of yon black mountain fall down and bury me! If you want a supper of cold lead, go in, and I'll warrant it will be your last."

"And where is it you are going yourself, Mrs. Cooney, if you plaze, ma'am?"

"Where am I going, is it? Where you shall not come, you unmannerly

blackguard! and if I don't remember you, Corney Brady, for this night's work, may I lose my character in the country, and so that's all I have to say about it."

"God forbid I should offend you, Mrs. Cooney," said the man, in a deprecatory tone, "but we are sworn to do the work—egad! I wish I had no hand in it anyhow."

"Well, then, I tell you to your comfort that Mr. Wyville is gone not many minutes ago to Mrs. Connell's, at the Royal Harp Hotel, and if you wish to talk with him on business, by making haste you may perhaps overtake him, and so good luck to you, boys, and good night!"

I heard Bridget's quick step along the road for a few moments, and then all

was still again. No time was to be lost, and as the moon was now rising, I stole quietly down to the river's side, and pursued the rugged path that led to McNamara's Ford.

CHAPTER III.

"He sat her on a milk-white steed,
And himself upon a gray—
He never turned his face again,
But bore her quite away."

"*Knight of the Burning Pestle.*"
BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

BRIDGET performed her errand right well, and I had not long to wait ere I heard the rapid tramp of a horse along the road, and soon Larry joined me.

"Did you meet any one, Larry, on the road?" I inquired, as he prepared Diamond for my mounting and arranged

and fastened a small leathern case on the pommel of the saddle.

"No, master," replied he, handing me my pistols and a stout horsewhip with a steel handle, "the devil a man I saw, except it be a woman, in a long grey cloak, who was waiting by the side of the road as if she wanted somebody. Maybe your honor would just step up to the road and see who it is?"

"Do you know who she is?"

"Just as your honor likes—I do and I don't."

"You may say, Larry."

"Well then, master, she is very like that young jintleman that was in the boat with you when you rowed up to Flynn's cabin one morning."

"Are you sure it was Miss Fitzpatrick?"

"As sure as I am that yon moon is showing her pretty face over Slieve-Arran just now!"

I was amazed and perplexed. She who so violently opposed this connection of her brother with Mary Donovan, now urging it on with all her might, and her family, also! It was a perfect mystery. I mounted my horse, and telling Larry to take a small, light skiff I had fortunately moored on the lake, not far from the ford, I bid him speed, and, if possible, overtake the boys before they reached the landing-place near Ballybog.

The road was steep and rugged, occasionally almost blocked up by huge boulders, or worn into dangerous channels by the rush of mountain torrents from the heights above, so that I was obliged

for some time, notwithstanding my impatience, to pick my way cautiously. This gave me time for reflection. I never knew till now how deeply, but, alas! how hopelessly, I loved this mountain maid! To describe my sensations of pity, indignation, horror, and disgust at the horrid deed, even now perhaps accomplished, is impossible. To tear an unwilling, resisting female from her home by violence—thus to assail the modesty of her nature and the pride of her sex—to place her in a position where the only alternative was, either to marry her cowardly abductor, or to return to the world tainted in character—to do this was the acme of selfish villainy—the act of a coward and a scoundrel! And how would, how could the poor girl meet this sad emergency? Contemplating

her character, I felt satisfied that nothing but felonious violence could compass her ruin, and that even then her consent would never be extorted to a union with Archibald Fitzpatrick.

The thought, however, of her perilous position almost drove me to distraction. I now spurred on my willing steed—she dashed along as if she sympathized with her master, and I at length reached, without scathe or damage, the grove that sheltered Ballybog to the north, and fastening the mare up in a shed used for turf, I paused for one moment to consider what was best to be done.

As the road round the Lough was circuitous, I well knew that Larry and his companions would arrive almost as soon as myself, and therefore as a measure of precaution I resolved to

meet them at the landing-place and give them those necessary directions which I had hitherto had no opportunity of doing. Besides, were I singly to encounter the abduction party, they might be enabled to paralyse all my efforts by securing me before the arrival of my friends. That measures had already been taken to effect this, I too well knew by what had passed at Bridget Cooney's cabin.

As I approached the landing-place I saw the two boats at no great distance, stealing along under the shadow of the impending bank, and in a few minutes the three men were by my side. They were unarmed, except that each grasped a stout shillelah in his hand.

Giving my orders deliberately and

coolly, I started alone up the footpath, and made my way directly to the house. The moon was now high in the heavens, and I could clearly distinguish every object.

Not a human being was to be seen, but close by the well-known porch was the dead body of poor Bran, who had evidently lost his life in defence of his mistress. My worst conjectures were now verified, and the fate of Mary Donovan I felt was sealed! A sudden faintness seized me for the moment, and I staggered against the door. It opened with my weight, and recollection returned as I found myself in the passage.

Voices above arrested my attention, and quietly climbing the stairs I paused on the landing. I at once distinguished

the peculiar intonation of Thady Houligan. I listened.

"Don't throuble, Phelim my boy, about the furniture or the clothes, but carry down the boxes, for surely it's there we will find all the gold and the silver the old scraw was always talking about. The cart and mule are at the back door—make haste!—it's broad moonlight, and little is the time we have to lose."

"Botherashion, Thady — make less noise," said the other, "sure it's no joke lifting this blue box—it's as heavy as a barrel o' taties. If it's gold, or if it's silver, egad! it's worth a struggle or two to lift it. But where, Thady, must we hide the boxes when we have got them? The whole country will be up about the colleen that's run away."

"And who, Phelim, is there to care about her?" replied the virtuous Thady, "except it be that young Sacchenach at Rathlynn, and he's out of harm's way, I can tell you, and knows by this time what a fool he was to meddle with other people's business."

"If he is out of harm's way, you are not, you villain!" exclaimed I, showing myself to the astonished thieves; "tell me this moment where Miss Donovan is, or I will blow your brains out, you scoundrel!"

Thady, seeing no means of escape, dropped on his knees, but the other, who was near to where I stood, bending down, made a sudden rush through the door, and cleared the staircase before I could arrest his progress.

As I turned round, Thady tried the

same dodge, but I caught him a blow with the butt-end of my whip on his leg, which I felt must disable him for the present, if not for life. The leg was broken, and he lay helpless, struggling, and bawling for mercy.

"Oh, weira, weirasthru!—ruined I am entirely!—Oh, sure my thigh and my back's broken!—the Holy Virgin!—Oh, Mr. Wyville, have mercy upon a poor man!—sure I was doing nothing at all, at all, but saving my dear master's property from these murdering villains—Oh, weira, weira! ruined it is I am entirely!—sure, Mr. Wyville, you will not strike an old man and he down before you?"

"Where is your young mistress, Miss Donovan? Tell me that, you villain;" and I cocked a pistol and placed the muzzle in close proximity to his head.

"Murther—spare my life, Mr. Wyville, and I will tell you all. Och, sure, it's ruined for life I am. Miss Donovan, is it? Why sure, then, those blackguards o' the world have carried her off, and I doing all I could to pervent it! But och, sir, what is one man against half a dozen?"

"And where have they carried her to? Tell me true, or by all the saints I'll——"

"Ochone—ochone! have pity Mr. Wyville, and do not send a poor man out of the world, and he having no time to spake to his own innocence. Be patient, kind sir, and only just give me a few years 'to make my soul,' and I will tell you all I know! Where is she gone, is it? Why then the devil a bit I know, but they have taken my

girl Ailey with them, and told me she would come to no harum, neither she nor the young lady."

"And who were the villains that have committed this outrage? Answer me that question, or you are a dead man!"

"It's the Sligo boys they are, all but one, and he's the captain till another joins them."

"And who is that one?"

"Mr. Ryan, Esq., that once owned Rathlynn. Oh, sir! he's a bad man and a fierce, and a right-hand man to the young master over there at—at——"

"Where?"

"At the Mount."

"Young Mr. Fitzpatrick, you mean?"

"The same, and bad cess to him for bringing me into this scrape! Weira—

weira—I'm kilt entirely—oh! what will become of poor Thady now, and he a cripple for life?"

"Not half that you deserve—you—a traitor to your master, and a plundering villain caught in the very fact! We will see, Master Houligan, what a judge and jury will say to you about this matter. And so you will not say where the party are gone? Remember now, your only chance of mercy is to tell all you know. Speak, man, or——"

"Oh, Mr. Wyville, it's the terrible man you are looking just now—sure wouldn't I tell you if I knew, but they never told me, and I can only guess that Sligo boys would go to Sligo."

"How long have they left?"

"About an hour, and they took the south road towards Donegal."

"Were they mounted?"

"Yes, sir, and well; and the young lady had an ilegant horse and side-saddle, and though she struggled and screamed, and called upon her father, and then upon your honour, to help her, poor cratur, yet they told her she should come to no harum if she would go quietly and trust to their honour."

"Their honour indeed! There were six—were they armed?"

"Only two—Squire Ryan and Phil; the others had shillelahs."

"Phil? Who is he?"

"Akin to Mrs. Bridget Cooney, the midwife near the Ford."

I whistled, and was soon joined by my party. I pointed out the boxes which Thady was about to purloin. I forced from him the name of his

associate, and committing the man and the property to the charge of Dan McBride I was leaving the house, when all at once poor Mr. Donovan occurred to my mind; strange to say, in the excitement I had forgotten him.

I opened the door of the parlour, and there he was in his arm-chair, the room all in disorder, and he suffering from one of those violent attacks to which he was so liable. What could be done? After some thought I had him placed in Thady's cart, and sent the two boys with him to Father Roche's house, where I felt well assured he would be carefully tended. Then, writing a hurried note to Colonel D'Arcie, acquainting him with the facts, and requesting he would take charge of Mr. Donovan's papers and property, I mounted my horse, and

charging the boys and Larry to follow me as quickly as possible, I took the road to the town of Donegal.

CHAPTER IV.

"And having hied the livelong night,
Thro' hail and heavy showers,
He found himself at peep o' light
Hard by Caerlavrock's towers."

Ballad.

Scarcely had I left the gloomy precincts of Ballybog ere the snow began to fall in large flakes, and soon the whole country put on its white and wintry mantle. I did not know the road, but I well knew the direction in which I was to go. Diamond, as we started, threw up her small head, and

showed that she required neither whip nor spur to stimulate her on the path of duty. I really think on occasions like this that a generous quadruped such as a horse, and even a dog, will seem to guess the urgency of the occasion, and puts forth his energies as if he was part and parcel in the matter. My object was, if possible, to overtake the gang of villains, and by passing them, to be able to dodge them, and discover the place of their destination. To attempt a rescue single-handed I well knew was a rashness that would only recoil on myself.

The miscreants had a full hour and a half the start of me, and being well-mounted would be difficult to overtake. My only chance was that they might stop somewhere to bait their horses, and

that this would afford me the opportunity of passing them by. Brave Diamond! I will not venture to tell how long she was travelling the first ten miles of our route—it would not be believed — but the fabulous mare of Dick Turpin did not outdo her.

For a short rest, and to gain information, I reined up at a shibbeen-house of the better sort that stood lonely on the roadside.

The landlord, if he may be so called, came out, gave the mare some meal in warm water, adding, to my surprise, a tumbler glass of whisky, duly mixed with the other ingredients. I expressed my surprise, not much approving of this extraordinary dose.

"It is not the first time she has had

it, I'll go bail for that," said he, laughing; "I know the mare, sir,—she's not to be beat in the British dominions."

"Where," I asked, "did you see her before?"

"I lived with her master, and knew her as a filly. Her mother could beat any horse in Dumfriesshire at trotting."

This little colloquy put us in good humour with one another, and finding Mr. McPherson was only lately come into this part of the world, I felt he might be trusted.

He told me a party had passed that way in desperate haste, but had not stopped to bait. Two men rode before and two behind, and a female —escorted or guarded by two other men, one on each side of her—was

in the centre. Behind one of the men, who rode a powerful horse, was another female. He thought the first lady spoke or called out, but they passed so rapidly that he could not distinguish what she said. I informed him of the real circumstances of the case, and asked his advice how to proceed.

"You must not be seen," said he, "but you must act by employing other parties. They are probably at Donegal by this time, but I do not think they will stop there. Dodge them to their haunt if you can, and raise the country upon them. Money will do anything. It is a disgraceful business, and I wish you success."

I gained considerably upon them

ere I reached the county-town, and as the snow did not fall now, I could actually trace the marks of their horses' hoofs as I rushed along. I found by inquiry that a female, only accompanied by two persons, had left the town by the road southward, from whence I concluded that the rest of the escort had remained in the town. For two I felt I was a match, and this redoubled my ardour in the pursuit.

On, Diamond, on! At her utmost speed the excited animal dashed along, till, just as the moon was being obscured, I saw the party slowly mounting a sharp eminence before me. Not a moment did I pause—the safety and honour of her I loved was the prize, and I felt, had there

been a dozen men, I could have attacked them without a moment's hesitation.

The snow, now several inches deep, deadened the sound of my horse's footsteps, and it was manifest, as I approached nearer, that they had no suspicion of my purpose. In a moment I felled one of the fellows with a blow upon his head, and was turning to attack the other—who I at once saw was Ryan—when, too quick for me, he struck me violently under the ear, and so stunned me for the moment that I fell from my horse, and was some moments ere I recovered perfect consciousness.

A shriek—a most piercing shriek still rung in my ears, and knowing well from whom it had proceeded, I arose from

the ground in a perfect fit of desperation. I listened, but there was no sound—I looked about me, perchance the miscreant I had unhorsed was there—but no, all was silent as the grave; and I had the mortification of knowing that, for the present at least, I was foiled. With difficulty I remounted my horse—the pain of the blow I had received was excruciating—I felt confused and giddy. Nevertheless, I determined to track their footsteps in the snow, which was easy to be done, as there had been no recent passing that way. Painfully but steadily I followed the trail for nearly two miles, when I came to a considerable stream; here all signs of any track ceased, and though I spent an hour in examining every contiguous road or path—even the fields and the

woodlands—I could discover no further traces, and was obliged to return to the town, mad with vexation, and suffering no little from the blow I had received. The morning was now dawning, and seeing a light in a comfortable-looking inn, I obtained admittance, and threw myself on a bed exhausted and despairing.

A few hours' deep and refreshing sleep almost restored my frame to its usual activity—all I now felt was a general sensation of soreness arising from my fall, and the blow I had received. But my mind was anything but calm. The events of the last night were as a horrid dream, and I could scarcely believe that, with success so nearly within my grasp, I could have been so suddenly foiled.

To think that I had been so near Mary Donovan, and had not even exchanged one word, nor even one token of recognition! Was it possible, or was it a mere vision of the night? Alas! the contusion from which I still suffered was a sad evidence of the truth, and I felt there was now no use in indulging in unavailing regrets for the past—I must collect all my energies for the future.

I rose. It was nearly mid-day, and my first care after breakfast was to inquire whether any of the party were still in the town. But how to go about it? I was a perfect stranger to every one. It all at once suggested itself to me that I would consult some man of the law, and try if it would not be possible to gain the assistance of the authorities in a search, and in effecting

a rescue. I called the landlord, and inquired if there was a respectable solicitor in the place.

He laughed outright.

"If it's a keen attorney you want, there's Mr. O'Duol will suit your turn entirely. As for 'respectable,' all the west country attorneys may be respectable, for anything I know, but I take devilish good care myself never to go near them. Egad! sir, I had rather put up with any injury than put my head into one of their offices.

I was not myself ignorant of west-country practice, but this caution had its use. I went to Mr. O'Duol. His office was a small room with bare weather-stained walls, dirty boarded floor, a deal table, and two rush-bottomed chairs. There was a dirty outer

office, where sat a lanky half-starved youth, hair uncombed, face and hands unwashed, and his once black coat stained with grease, and out at both elbows and under the arms.

Mr. O'Duol was a little fat man, bald except where a tuft of grey hair stuck out over his ears like bristles. His clothes were decent, but his linen was dirty. His nose, nearly flat in the middle, rose like a button over his mouth, and that button was red. A few old tattered law books on a plain deal shelf were the only signs of legal capability visible. I did not like the man, but as I must say something, I put a suppositious case, and then inquired how far the authorities could interfere.

"A case of abduction, is it? A serious thing, but common," said the

little gentleman as if talking to himself, and playing with three or four grey bristles that could scarcely be called whiskers.

"Then I suppose you are authorized to interfere," continued he, "either as the brother of the young woman, or as some very near relation?"

"That is no answer to my question," said I, "I only put a suppositious case, and you evade it."

"Don't be hasty. I must know, of course, in what relation you stand to the young woman. In fact, sir, put the suppositious case aside altogether—let me know names and circumstances, and if Thady O'Duol does not give you a lift—egad! nobody else will. Let me have names and circumstances, and I am your man."

Here the little attorney rubbed his ink-stained hands together in great glee, in the full expectation he had hooked a gudgeon.

"I did not come to put my affairs, or the affairs of others into your hands Mr. O'Duol," said I, "it was merely to have a plain answer to a plain question, and for which answer I was ready to pay the customary fee. As you cannot or will not answer me, I wish you good morning." I left the office of this shark as if I had made my escape from a prison, nor did I heed his repeated calls for me to stay, though he followed me through the outer office to the street door. When I returned to the Inn, the landlord laughed heartily when I described to him the interview.

"You are in for a bill and a long

one too, take my word for it," said he; "I never knew a silly sheep enter that place that did not come out shorn."

"Nor a goose, I suppose," rejoined I, "that did not come out plucked."

"Egad! you're right, and considering all the geese he has plucked, he ought to be able to supply Dublin itself with feathers.'

The good man here shook his fat sides with another hearty laugh at his own joke.

"It was well you were wide awake enough not to give 'names and circumstances,' for if he could have got hold of these, if he was not employed for you, he'd be sure to go against you. He would get his hands in somehow or other, depend upon it."

"But the bill," said I, "he can have no charge against me?"

"Can't he?" said my landlord, "you'll see. There will be for entering his office, six and eightpence; speaking to the clerk, the same; consulting him, one guinea; leaving instructions, the same; letters and parcels, thirteen and fourpence."

"But," said I, "I left no instructions, and there were neither letters nor parcels, and though I asked him a question he gave me no answer."

"Nor could he, with all his cunning; he's an ignorant ass, and all the law he ever knew would not fill my tobacco pipe. But like a spider in his web he looks out for flies, and good luck to those that get entangled in it!"

CHAPTER V.

"Ye speak like honest men, pray God ye prove so."
Henry VIII.

"Stat ferrea turris ad auras."
Virgil.

As I found on further inquiry that it was useless for me to apply to the authorities of the town, I had no other course to pursue than to wait the arrival of my own men, and to meet Bridget Cooney's nephew at the time and place appointed. In the meantime I strolled through the town

and its suburbs, and should have found much to interest me, had my mind been in a state to notice or to appreciate anything beyond the one object I had in view.

I passed a solitary hour amid the ruins of the ancient stronghold of the Earls of Tyrconnel. I visited the abbey founded by the same family. I mounted an eminence that separates the town from the bay, and could not help admiring the lovely situation chosen for this city of the west,—closed in on every side by hills of the brightest verdure, which had again, as their background, the wild and lofty mountains which, commencing in the county of Sligo, run through the whole of Donegal till they are lost in the sea.

But I could enjoy none of these

things. I felt restless and uneasy—every moment of delay seemed a cruel mockery. I was alarmed at the very idea of Mary Donovan being in the hands of such a horde of miscreants, even for an hour, and I was eager to rush into the fray and emancipate her at any sacrifice. But, alas! I was ignorant of the locality where she was concealed.

No one in the town seemed to know anything about the matter, and, indeed, few would turn a willing ear to any question I might ask. Everybody either seemed afraid to meddle, or deemed it a very allowable mode of proceeding in furtherance of the object to be attained. In fact, outrage of any kind rather attracts the sympathy and applause of the people—a sure proof of a state of society little short of absolute barbarism.

It seemed to me as if the time of meeting with Phil Cooney would never come. I listened anxiously as the church clock chimed every quarter—but every quarter seemed an hour at least. At length, as I paced the bank of the Eske, which runs through the town and encircles the northern base of the castle, the hour of twelve struck, flinging its solemn sound over the now silent streets, and reverberating from the lofty towers of the old fortalice, till it was lost amid the gentle hills that enclose the place on every side.

As the last reverberation died away I lost not a moment in procuring admittance to the castle. This indeed I had before arranged, and entering the gate I found myself in the large court-yard, and advancing to the centre there

awaited the presence of the man I sought.

Not a soul was visible. No noise stirred the echoes of the ancient and massive walls—the snow had long disappeared, and the moon, riding through the sky above, occasionally lighted up every object with its silvery gleam, whenever it emerged from the light and fleecy clouds that were skimming rapidly over the heavens. I grasped my iron-handled whip—I felt for my pistols,—for whether I would or not, a feeling of uneasiness stole over me when I remembered that it was in Ireland, not in England, that I was seeking a midnight interview with I knew not whom.

I had waited some time, and already began to feel the very questionable nature of the step I had taken, when I

saw a figure hastily emerge from the doorway of an old tower, and at once approach me.

"Is it your father's son I am spaking to," said he, pausing at a respectable distance, "is it the gintleman that lives by the Lough a long way off?"

"The same," I replied; "and I suppose I am addressing Mr. Phil Cooney?"

"The same, at your service."

"To cut matters short," eyeing him carefully from head to foot, "I suppose I may look upon you as a friend?"

The fellow paused, as if considering his answer. He was altogether a man *sui generis*. His figure was short, stout, and well-proportioned; his countenance—for the moon shone full upon it—good-humoured, with an expression of slyness underneath: not an atom of the Milesian

about him, for his hair was that kind of ugly red they call "foxy," and his high cheek-bones and thick lips at once proclaimed him Celt.

His costume was peculiar—smart, and partaking half of the squireen, and half of the horse-jockey. He wore a green jacket, with large steel buttons—a pair of leathern leggings confined his muscular calves, and reached from his knees to his laced boots—his trousers were of the same material as his coat, but the waistcoat was a kind of muddy red, showing an under-vest of blue. He had a thick shillelah in his hand.

"A frind is it?" at length he drawled out—"by dad, then, to tell the raal truth, that depinds on circumstances."

"I suppose you stand out for terms?"

"For money is it?" replied he, somewhat indignantly. "No! you are out there; that is not our Irish way of doing such business. You don't think I'd act the thraitor for money, do you?"

"Then what are the 'circumstances' to which you allude? At what price am I to gain your assistance?"

"For fear you may affront me, I'll jist in one word tell you how the matter stands. My aunt Biddy, who is a good woman, spite of the devil, told me that imp o' the Dioul, young Fitzpatrick, was going to have 'a mountain ride' with a young girl, and her too a foreigner. Now your honor sees with half an eye, that no one but a blackguard of the world would do such a thing as that. She a poor colleen, with

neither home, nor country, nor friends! It's not a fair spree anyhow. Now, hear me out," said he, as I was interrupting him. "Well—this Fitzpatrick gets that idle sthrap Ryan to be his first man—and, by the mortial! there's not a more desperate blackguard in all Ulster than that same. Well, they were obleeged to tell Aunt Biddy something about it, or she'd have put a spoke in the wheel—for your honor sees she's at the bottom of everything; and so she sends for me, and I was hired, with three other Sligo boys, to run the rig as far as the ould Tower. Mind ye, now, this was all my bargain —nothing more; so now I'm free to act as I like, and, egad! it's to blow the whole schame to Old Nick that I'm well inclined—let alone Aunt Biddy's

orders. We're wild fellows here in the west, but there are not many, I'll go bail, that would dirty their fingers in such a business as this. Now stop, your honor,—wait till I've made a clane breast of it. You ask if I'm your friend. Answer me one question, and I'll insinse you all about it. I have heerd that you were pulling a string wid her as well as Fitzpatrick—if she gets out o' this, what is your honor's maning towards her? Will it be out o' the frying-pan into the fire—is she safer with one than with the other? You know what I mane. Now, tell me the truth, as you're an English gintleman, that should scorn a lie."

"But first let me ask you a question," said I, eyeing him sternly, "before I answer yours. If you so

much disapprove of the whole transaction—and indeed well you may—how came you to consent to take any part in it?"

"Just this. My not joining would not have saved the poor colleen—they would have found another hand; but by joining I know where she is, and, without turning traythor, can do her good maybe."

"You conceive, then," said I, "that your engagement with them is at an end?"

"Surely, and no mistake—I was dismissed this very day, and not a word said."

"But you decline to assist me, unless my designs towards Miss Donovan are honourable?"

"That's the very thing."

"But how," said I, "can I prove that?—you can only have my word for it."

"Your word is all I want, your honour has a good character in the counthry."

"Well, then, Mr. Philip Cooney," said I, "on my honour as an Englishman and a gentleman, I mean no ill. My designs are strictly honourable, and I have neither wish nor the intention to get this young lady into my power. If I can only rescue her from this band of ruffians, and restore her to her father, it is all I propose—nothing more. So, therum a-lauv,* and let us strike the bargain. I honour your scruples, and feel that with such a man I am quite safe."

* "Give me your hand."

"And now let us go," said he, "this is no place for a long cosherin; besides, there is no time to lose—I can tell you more when we are between four walls."

We left the place, and he accompanied me to the inn, where soon a good supper, a bottle of whisky, and a boiling kettle put my new friend in high good humour. In answer to my questions, he informed me that Miss Donovan was now secreted in an old tower among the mountains, the last remaining property of the once wealthy family of the Ryans—that Ryan himself was as one with the Fitzpatricks, to whom he had lived neighbour for many years—that Archibald and he were sworn companions in every species of sport or mischief—that by him young

Fitzpatrick had been encouraged in every species of licentiousness. He said, moreover, that Ryan was my deadly enemy, on account of being ejected fron Rathlynn, and forced to pay his debts, and that he was a dangerous antagonist, inasmuch as he knew every inch of the country, had a good "back,"* was a man of powerful frame, and well up to the use of weapons.

"By dad!" continued Phil, as he filled his third tumbler of punch, "it was the heavy blow surely he gave your honor, and when he reached the tower, he told the colleen dhass that he had settled your business, anyhow. The poor thing, when he said that, turned as pale as death, and went off insensible as the stone floor she laid

* Following—faction.

upon, so we left her to Ailey Houligan to take care of her. My blood ran cold to see the poor creature in such a way, but when I looked at her, I did not wonder at the squireen wishing to have her, for if ever my eyes caught sight of an angel, she is one. You have not many ladies in England like her, I'll go bail; she's the very most beautiful famale I ever clap my eyes on, and no mistake, so here's you honor's health, and long life to you!"

"But how happened Ailey Houligan to be there?—she was not with Ryan last night."

"Oh! that was all a thrick to desave the townsfolk, so that there should be no notice taken. Four of us, with Ailey, took another road, and got to the tower first."

"Did you see Miss Donovan before you left?" I inquired, anxiously.

"Yes; and there she sat on a chair, with her head down, and her hands folded before her, and never moved or spoke one word, but Ailey tould me she had fretted all night about your honor—'her only friend,' she said, 'and he too murdered for the sake of her.'"

"We must not lose a moment, Phil —what do you advise?"

"Well, there is no time to lose, for Ryan tould me, the vagabone, that the young squireen was coming to-morrow himself, and that he was bringing the priest with him, and that they were to be married, the young woman and he, 'for you know,' said Ryan, laughing, 'after this spree, nobody else will have

her, and so she'll be sure to make the best of the matter, and become an honest woman after all."

"Has she been subjected to any violence or ill-treatment?" said I, shuddering.

"She? no. Ailey has never left her a moment, except when she rode from the town to the old tower, which was not more than four short miles, and, egad! after they saw you, they had enough on their hands to get there at all. Tim Rourke had a devil of a cut on his head, and could hardly get along at all after they left you for dead. I'm sorry your honor followed them—it puts them on their guard, and will hurry matters, and, besides, what chance had you, single-handed, against such a fellow as Ryan, and another to

back him? Ryan himself is a match for any two in Sligo, or Donegal either."

"Well, I believe," said I, "it was imprudent, but I was anxious to prevent Miss Donovan reaching the tower at all."

"No wonder in life—but there's no harm done—not a hair of her head is touched, and Ryan tould me that yon black-eyed Miss Fitzpatrick threatened, if the poor colleen was not well treated, she would raise the country upon them, and she's the woman to do it, too."

Sleep I could not—sleep was out of the question, so Phil and I agreed to proceed on foot to the tower, directing the boys and Larry to follow singly, and to meet us at a farm-house about half a mile from that place. It

so happened that a 'cleveen' of Phil's lived there who *could be trusted.*"

"We were at school together," explained he, "and Denis and I were comrades in lessons, and thricks too, and by the same token, a better fellow never lived. Oh, but he's a jewel of a boy, and so your honor will find him."

It was resolved that we should all start at once for the Tower of Kinvarra, or Kinvarra Castle, as it was called, the place where Mary Donovan was immured. It was not more than three in the morning, and not a soul was stirring; so, sending Larry and his companions, Mick Daly and Dan McBride, by another route, Phil and I took the road

on which I had the previous night encountered Ryan and the other man. We did not leave the town together, but Phil, going first, waited for me about half a mile off, and we then walked on together. As we passed the spot where the "scrimmage" had taken place, my companion shook his head and again denounced my proceeding as foolish, "for," said he, "they know now they are looked after, and so there will be no taking them unawares."

"But they think, probably, I am killed?" said I.

"Sure then," said he, "they know better than that by this time, for I saw one of the fellows standing opposite the inn door watching, so that if there was likely to be a

row, they might leave the tower, and go up further into the mountains. But as all was quiet, and nothing particular to be heard of you, they were satisfied—only they know you are in Donegal, and sure enough, Ryan will have a sharp look out, lying in the corner of his eye."

When we came to the river where I had lost all traces of the party, I inquired of Phil how that was.

"Sure, then," said he, "that was a clever dodge. The wather, you see, on the further side is shallow, so they left the road, and went along the river till they had passed that turn you see yonder to the left; there they stole up the boreen which leads them right into the road, such as it is, that leads to Kinvarra Castle,

about a mile and a half to the eastward. As soon as we cross the Bridge you'll find the road leads off to the left. And so it did, and a brisk walk of a mile brought us to the farm-house of the aforesaid Denis. The men had also just arrived, and were stowed away in the barn, where they had the enjoyment of a snug berth among some fresh oat-straw.

As we approached, Denis came to the door to welcome us. He was in regular dishabille (not, indeed, that we are to suppose he was ever otherwise); his head was uncovered, and his long lank hair pointed to every quarter of the compass; his old brown coat was stained with mud about the shoulders, as if he had been carrying the potato-basket; his black breeches were un-

buttoned at the knees, his black stocking cut short at the ankles, and as for brogues, there were none, at least on his feet.

Crushing his dudeen against the end of a half-burned turf, and whiffing away powerfully, there he stood to greet us.

"The butt o' the evening to you, Denis," said my companion, grasping the rough paw of his friend; "and God save all here," entering the house.

"God save you kindly," said Mrs. Denis, from within. "Bannacht lhat. My blessing to ye, Phil Cooney, and to the good woman there, down by the Lough."

"Thank ye, Mrs. Denis—you are the woman she loves entirely."

I was now formally presented to my new friends.

"Cead millia failte ghud," said Mrs. Denis, as she wiped with her apron the "siesteen," or low seat near the fire. "Your honor's welcome, and it's only I'd wish we had a palace to put you in, for this is a poor place for the jintry anyhow."

"Thank you, Mrs. Denis," said I, "I prefer this to any palace just now, and will make myself quite comfortable."

"It's kind of you, sir, to say so, and we'll do our best."

"Arra, thin, Norah—how are you, my chorra ma-chree?" said Phil, to a very pretty girl, who was busily replenishing the fire with turf, but who did not venture to return his gaze.

"Faix, then, Phil Cooney, I'm bravely," replied she, "and how is yourself?"

"All the better for seeing you, my colleen dhas:—egad, Norah, I'm in fine spirits, and if you ask me, I could dance 'Cover the Buckle' wid you, darlin'."

Norah only smiled at this sally of her lover, as I began to suspect him to be, and soon left the room for an inner apartment.

Phil and Denis now closed round the large turf-fire.

"Have you any news, Denis?" said Phil, with a knowing look at his friend.

"The sorra a taste," replied he; "but I have just had a long dish o' discoorse wid you know who, but he'd nothing to tell, only that the squireen was expected to-morrow."

"Night or morning?"

"Can't tell—they did not know over at the Tower."

"Norah, Norah!" shouted out Phil—"now for the noggin o' thick milk for two of us, agra gal-machree—it's perished we are with the drought. By dad, Mrs. Denis, that's a good hanging o' bacon ye have there, long may ye live to enjoy it; and, now I think of it, here's a quather o' tobaccy o' Limerick pig-tail for ye, Denis abouchal!"

"May the Lord encrase you, Phil!" replied the other, highly delighted with this piece of friendly attention; "and what is it you and the gintleman would like to have to ate—a cut o' the bacon and a dish o' taties?"

"Rasher and eggs, man alive; and afther that let Mrs. Denis or Norah mull a quart o' porter with a stick* in it. Sure, I ought to know the way o' the house by this time."

* A glass of rum or whisky.

I will not fatigue my readers with any further description of this real Irish scene; nor will I tell them how we all regaled ourselves till the day broke upon us, and we retired for an hour's rest before commencing operations.

CHAPTER VI.

"Let solid walls impound
The captive fair, and dig a moat around—
Be windows there from which she dare not fall,
And help so distant, 'tis in vain to call:
Still means of freedom will some power devise,
And from the baffled ruffian snatch his prize."

Crabbe.

My mind was now more easy. I felt comfortable in the conviction that Mary had received no real injury, nor yet, beyond the violence of her capture, any bad treatment; and, indignant as I felt with Florence for mixing herself up in such desperate proceedings, yet I could

not but attribute to her influence—and rightly as I afterwards found—the uncommon fact of a female companion being allowed to the captive; and I also shrewdly suspected that it was by her contrivance that her brother had hitherto taken no personal share in the abduction. As for Ryan, I had already determined in my own mind that, as soon as opportunity offered, I would pay him back the debt I owed him, with compound interest to boot.

After all, and with all their faults, there is often good to be found in the impulsive nature of the Irish. I do not mean to say they are particular as to facts, nor do I deny that their imaginations often run away with their reason; but I have found, when properly and kindly treated, that they

evince sterling attachment. "They are all schamers in this country," Larry was wont to say—and so the majority may be; but oppression and ill-treatment by their landlords or their agents have made them so, and there has been nothing in the example of their betters to correct their faults or weaken their prejudices. The greatest fault I find with this people is their servility, and the barefaced way in which they flatter the very persons they despise, and whom, had they the power, they would not hesitate to crush and exterminate. And yet there is much that is generous about them, and in their social relations with one another they are often patterns to more civilized people. The little band I had now

around me I could thoroughly trust —they had been tried once on the Bridge of Mullikeen, and I feared not to trust them now The real question arose—how was my force to be made available?

The plan we had agreed upon, was that Norah should go down to the Tower, as she was well acquainted with Ryan, and take a small present of new milk, eggs and butter, and that, if possible, she should contrive an interview with Miss Donovan; and, above all, that she should ascertain how matters stood there in every respect. I wrote a short note to the captive, encouraging her to keep up her spirits, and to feel fully convinced that ere the day was over her rescue would be attempted, and no doubt effected.

Norah had been down and returned, ere I awoke from a deep slumber, caused by complete exhaustion of body and mind. The news she brought was perplexing. Ryan was not in the Tower — he had gone out early in the morning, but whither no one could tell. As it was well known that Norah was a relation of Phil's, and that she was his sweetheart, and as Phil might be said to be one of the party, no suspicion was raised by the young woman's visit, and she therefore, under pretence of seeing Ailey, got admittance into the prison, and held communication with the fair captive.

"Oh, sir, your honor," said Norah, to me, "I wish you could have

seen how the poor young lady, as soon as she read your note, fell on her knees to thank God for your safety, and how eagerly she inquired whether you were hurt in the scrimmage, and how little she seemed to think of herself. And she was going on to ask many questions, when Ailey came in again, and I said no more, nor did she, for fear of something being thought of it; but, just as I was going away, and Ailey had gone for a moment on the landing (she is coorting one of the boys there I think), the lady came up to me and told me to thank your honor for all you had done for her, and she requested me to say that she would be on the watch

all day, but desired you would not attempt anything again without plenty of assistance. She would have written, but had no pen, nor yet paper nor ink. I just told her the boys from Rathlynn were close by, and others would join, so she need be under, no alarm, as her escape was sure. I think she would have sent more messages to your honor than I could carry, but Ailey came in again, and told me to be gone, as she saw Mr. Ryan coming down the path towards the Castle."

Norah added that there were only two men in the Tower at present, but more were coming with the squireen, she was told. All seemed quiet, and there was no sign of any suspicion.

And now, what was to be done? We held a council of war. I proposed going at once to the Tower, and taking away Miss Donovan by force, but Denis and Phil both agreed that it was impossible, the door as was too strong to be forced except by the aid of cannon.

"We must have some one inside who will open the door," said Denis, "or they will only laugh at us."

It was too manifest that we were in a fix, for though our force of six persons was just now superior to theirs, yet two resolute fellows inside the Tower, well armed, might set a company of soldiers at defiance.

"Will you go down, Phil," said Denis, "they won't suspect you, man, for you are one of them."

"I was one of them," replied Phil, "but I don't like the job—it looks desateful. I am ready to tell them my mind, and to use force openly; but, by the mortial, I cannot act the sacret traythor."

There was a long pause. At length, Phil called Norah in, and asked whether she would undertake to go to the Tower, and, by some means or other, contrive an entrance for the men. The courageous girl at once assented, saying, she would run any risk to save the young lady, but how it was to be managed must be left to herself. She would wave a handkerchief from one of the windows when the door might be attacked.

Norah accordingly set off to the Tower with another basket well provided as a

present. I confess these delays and deliberations were irksome to me. Here was a female unlawfully detained, and actually imprisoned, and I could scarcely recognize any other mode of action than proceeding boldly and openly to the rescue.

Anxious to know how matters had gone on at Ballybog after I left it, I sent for Larry Lanigan, and shocked indeed was I at what he told me. He said that Mr. Donovan's boxes and other property had been safely deposited at Doonore, that the Colonel was from home, but the ladies were much distressed about the abduction of Miss Donovan, and had sent off a special messenger to him to Londonderry to inform him what had happened, with a request he would return immediately.

Poor Mr. Donovan had not survived his removal to Father Roche's more than an hour, but died in a perfectly unconscious state. The Priest had sent assurances that he should be respectably interred in the Protestant burial-ground.

"And anyhow, Master, it was lucky," said Larry, "that the ould jintleman was taken before he knew of his daughter's being run away with by those divil's imps."

It was now noon, and time to be stirring. It was arranged that I, with Dan Mc Bride and Mick Daly, should go at once openly to the Tower and demand the release of Miss Donovan, and that Larry, who was a sharp, quick, and intelligent fellow, and whom I could thoroughly trust, should approach the Tower another way, and, if possible, re-

main undiscovered till the signal to open the door was given by Norah. He was then to raise a loud shout, and we were at once to rush forward and enter the building.

We started on our mission with a determination not to return without attaining our object, by fair means or foul; and meanwhile Phil and Denis, both anxious about Norah's safety, were to approach the Tower together, as if neutral in the business, but prepared, nevertheless, to aid us to the utmost, if necessary.

Leaving the narrow glen in which Denis's house was situated, the boys and I proceeded at a brisk pace, till we had attained the summit of a gentle eminence, from whence the Castle of Kinvarra and its domain were fully displayed before us.

It was a beautiful and striking picture. In the centre of the vale was a small lake, still as a mirror in a frame of the loveliest green. On the north side of this an abrupt mass of rock rose twenty or thirty feet from its margin, and on the land side a natural depression gave it the appearance of being an island. On this rock rose the old Tower of Kinvarra, built, no doubt, centuries ago by one of those licensed robbers who, under the name of chiefs of clans or septs, spoiled and oppressed their weaker neighbours, and waged incessant war with one another. It was square and massive, and differed from many of the towers of later erection by having a lofty turret rising from one angle, and being also finished with battlements and embrasures. The windows, from the base to two-

thirds of the height of the building, were dark and narrow, as if to prevent any ingress; but higher up were three of larger dimensions, distinguished by stone mullions, and manifestly indicating the dwelling apartments of the proprietor. A ridge of limestone rock shelved up gradually to the north, covered with tangled brushwod, among which were growing a vast number of large and ancient thorns, with here and there a gnarled and fantastic oak, twisted and contorted by age and the want of nourishment, arising from the hot and scanty soil on which they grew. A range of grey, perpendicular rocks, in many parts half hidden amid a profusion of ivy, closed the eastern end of the vale, while to the west extended a flat pastoral plain,

opening to the champaign country beyond. Southward of the lake rich meadows rose gradually from its margin, and in the far distance beyond these might be seen the lofty mountain range of Kilculleen. It was indeed a beautiful scene, and one which, under other circumstances, I should have enjoyed.

There stood the proud, massive fortalice of other days, rising from the bold rock, and claiming, as it were, the sovereignty of the district; and on the calm, unruffled bosom of the lake were reflected the exact shape and proportions of its ancient walls. It was a scene I shall never forget —but how was it now profaned to the most detestable uses!

As we stood for a few moments gazing and reconnoitring our ground, no sign even of habitation, least of all of defence,

was apparent in the Tower. All was still, and not a sound was heard but the occasional scream of water-coots, or the plashing of wild ducks amongst the reeds of the lake. We descended the hill by an oblique road that wound round the western corner of the lake, and, passing along the narrow edge of a dangerous morass or soft bog on one side, and a wall of rock on the other, we found ourselves standing in the partly natural, partly artificial, moat which defended the north side of the Tower.

Where we now stood the door or entrance was not visible, as this was only to be gained by ascending steps in the rock, which were to the eastward, and were flanked by a small square tower connected with the outer defences. Our object, however, was to withdraw the

attention of those within from the entrance, so that Larry could more securely play his part in this strange drama.

We had not stood there long ere Ryan showed himself at an arrow-slit close to us, and inquired, in an insolent tone, what we wanted there?

"I suppose, Mr. Wyville," said he, in a voice half-choked with passion, "that you are not satisfied with driving me out of house and home at Rathlynn, but you must follow me here to do the same. But I warn you to be gone—you have felt the weight of my arm once—the next time it will fall heavier still."

"I wish to have nothing to do with you, Mr. Ryan," I replied, calmly, "if you will deliver up the young lady, Miss Donovan, who is in your Tower, and detained here against her will. She must and shall be released!"

"You lie, sir! Miss Donovan, as you choose to call her, is not here; but if she were, what business is it of yours? Are you her brother, or her father, or her husband, or even her guardian, that you choose to make such a demand upon me?"

"I am her guardian and her friend:—ask her, and she will at once acknowledge that I act by her authority."

"What nonsense is that you are talking," said he, turning to withdraw—"if you will persist in saying that young woman is here, you had better force an entrance and search for her yourself."

At this moment I saw Larry making a sudden spring up the rock, near the small square tower before-mentioned, but out of sight of Ryan, the place where he stood being at the other angle. Without one moment's delay I climbed up the side of

this dry moat, and made at once for the great door of the Tower. It was ajar, and we all entered together. Within was a kind of vestibule, having on the left a guard-room, on the right a circular flight of stone steps leading to the rooms above. Beyond, through an archway, was a hall, lighted by two narrow windows, lofty, and with a groined ceiling. At one of these windows Ryan was standing, not at all suspecting that we were upon him, but, when he saw us enter, he raised a pistol and fired it at me. The bullet only slightly grazed my left shoulder. I rushed forward and dealt him such a sudden blow on his head with my cudgel, that it at once laid him prostrate and bleeding on the floor. Larry, with great presence of mind, immediately

bound him hand and foot, and we left him in order to dispose of the other miscreants.

They had fled to the battlements, where the boys captured them, there being only two, and they too were securely bound, and left on the leads, where they had no power to do mischief.

My next object was to find out the fair captive. This was no difficult matter, for Ailey, hearing the row, had fled the place, leaving the door of the room open where Miss Donovan was confined. It was a large chamber, wainscoted, with two mullioned windows, and a panelled ceiling. Mary in her peasant dress, with her large cloak folded round her, sat in the recess of one of the windows, as if waiting the turn of events. When she saw me, she im-

mediately rose—rushed forward—grasped my hand convulsively, and with difficulty articulated the words, "My father?"

I led her to her seat, and entreated her to be calm. I did not think the present a fit moment to make her acquainted with her father's death, I therefore merely said—"He has left Ballybog, and is with Father Roche."

"Thank God for this!" said she, while the tears streamed from her eyes, and her bosom heaved convulsively. "Oh, Mr. Wyville, you can well imagine all I have suffered since I was forced from my home and my dear father! He alone has sustained me, to Whom the miserable may ever look up with confidence and hope. But oh! how can I ever repay my debt of grati-

tude to you? Had you not befriended us, what would have become of me, and of my poor father! And then when I was told that you were killed that night, in your noble efforts to release me, I thought I should have died too. From infancy mine has been a hard lot, but all I have ever suffered did not equal what I suffered then."

"But, dear Mary, your sufferings, I trust, are now over—we must leave this accursed spot speedily, and I will at once convey you to those who are anxious to console and protect you."

"Oh where, Mr. Wyville, can I—ought I to go, but to my dear father! He will be looking for me, anxiously, and no one but myself knows how to treat him and to soothe his maladies. Can I not go there at once?"

"You will oblige me by going to Doonore first. It is almost on your road, and there you will hear all about Mr. Donovan, and if necessary can rejoin him afterwards."

"Pardon me, Mr. Wyville, I must —I will—oh, pardon me. I must go at once to my poor, dear father; there is the only place I ought to be, there alone can I have one moment's peace. Surely, surely, his daughter is his only friend; what can he do without her care and affection?"

I saw it was useless to argue this point, and as I knew the knowledge of Mr. Donovan's death would change her plans, I merely begged of her to accompany me as far as Donegal, where she would be secure from further annoyance, and where her future plans could be arranged at leisure.

She had scarcely assented to this proposal, when Larry entered the room suddenly, his face pale with terror and his voice trembling with agitation.

"Fly, sir, fly! By all the powers, there's the squireen coming down the hill, with a mob at his back —oh, millia murthers! It's all kilt we are. Master, what is to be done? Quick, quick!"

I looked through the other window, and, to my horror, saw the reality of the danger. In fact, it almost seemed that we were caught in our own trap. One moment, and my mind was made up.

"Larry," said I, as calmly as I could, "conduct Miss Donovan up the same glen by which you came—you

will find Phil Cooney and Denis there, and probably Norah also. Make the best of your way to the town, and I will join you there. Dearest Mary—do not delay a moment—it is your only chance of escape."

"But you will accompany us? Oh, Mr. Wyville, I cannot suffer you to incur all this risk on my account; rather leave me to my fate—they dare not injure me more!"

"Go, or you are lost!" I exclaimed. "If you value either my services or my honour, speed—there is not a moment to spare. Away, dearest Mary, and may God speed you! We shall meet again, I trust, in a few hours."

I folded her cloak closely around her—led the way to the door, which was still open, and waited till I saw her

and Larry rapidly ascending the glen, and out of sight of the coming foe. I then closed the gate, and fastened it with the heavy bars. Well did I know that the only chance she had of escape, was by our detaining Archibald Fitzpatrick and his friends at the Tower, and leading them to suppose she was still there.

In ten minutes' time they were at the gate of the Tower, and much did they marvel to find it closed against them. Long and loudly did they knock for admittance, but no one answered. At length, fearing they might disperse, or overtake the fugitives, I ascended the battlement and showed myself through one of the embrasures.

Great was the astonishment of my *ci-devant* friend Archibald to find

me in actual possession of Kinvarra Castle and all it contained—his cheek blanched, and his whole manner showed plainly the shock he had received. At length, assuming an air of coolness and importance, he sheltered himself in the deep doorway of the barbican or small square tower, and inquired if his friend, Mr. Ryan, was in the Castle.

I answered, "Yes."

"Will you open the gate, and allow me to speak to him?"

"Certainly not."

"Are you a prisoner there, Mr. Wyville, or in what capacity do you pretend to give us such answers as these?"

"I command the garrison, and your friend is my prisoner," said I, in a careless tone.

A loud shout of defiance from the crowd succeeded this declaration.

Archibald then entered into deliberation with two of his company, and coming forward again, inquired "whom we had in the Tower?"

"Those I will not deliver up to you, or your gang of miscreants."

There was another consultation—our besiegers were manifestly perplexed how to act. Archibald again spoke.

"You shall answer to me personally, Mr. Wyville, for this unwarrantable interference in what does not concern you. I tell you to open the gate, or by heavens I will set fire to it and burn you out."

"Do as you please, Mr. Archibald Fitzpatrick, but let me warn you that if one shot is fired at

me or any of my party—or any attempts made to set fire to the gate —I will hang Ryan and his men over the battlements."

"You dare not do it," said the squireen, pale and foaming with rage.

"And why not? What will a jury of twelve honest men say to your proceedings—to seize and drag a young lady from her home, and confine her against her will in a remote den like this? You may threaten, burn, and destroy as you please, but if I lay down my life for it, the law shall clutch you yet. Begone, you set of cowardly rascals, or you will find the whole country is rising upon you. Away, as you would save your lives—here you can

do nothing. We are too many and too strong for you."

Again there was a consultation, and soon two fellows approached the gate with a heap of dry wood and fern to kindle a fire.

"I warn you that the first man who approaches that door is a dead man," said I, motioning them to desist.

Notwithstanding my caution, however, one fellow, bolder than the rest, rushed forward and sheltered himself beneath the massive stonework that sustained the gate, and called out loudly for the combustibles, in order to effect their purpose.

But it so happened that he had not perceived a small grating in the door, which was either closed or opened as occasion required, and here was Dan

McBride stationed. The fellow's back being close to the door, he did not suspect any danger, till a smart poke from Dan's shillelah sent him reeling several yards from his position, and on looking for the cause of his mishap he took to his heels on seeing the muzzle of a huge horse-pistol on an exact line with his person.

I now felt the full advantage of our position. The whole proceeding on the part both of Archibald and Ryan was so outrageous and unlawful, and the further prosecution of their designs so dangerous to themselves and party, that at last they were obliged to come to terms, and on undertaking to withdraw altogether, I promised that Ryan and his men should be delivered up, and also the Tower itself. But this I would

not do till I had acquainted a magistrate of the county with the particulars —and in the presence of himself and a posse of his constables marched out, as the soldiers would say, with flying colours.

All this however required time, and notwithstanding my impatience to rejoin the liberated captive, and to place her under proper protection, it was two days before we could leave the Tower in safety. As our garrison marched out —being only three in number, to the great surprise and anger of the besiegers—Archibald, pale with passion and a thousand contending emotions, stepped up to me.

"And where is Miss Donovan?" said he, haughtily.

"She is burying her father," said I,

looking sternly at him—"whom you have murdered."

"Then she was not here when we arrived?"

"No, thank God!—she escaped you by a few minutes only. And now mark me, Mr. Fitzpatrick—I have not done with you yet. It is my intention to take immediate legal proceedings on behalf of that much injured young lady—against every one who has been aiding and abetting these abominable outrages."

A savage oath, and an even more savage look of defiance and hate, were the only answer I received. That night we slept safely and securely in the town of Donegal.

It had been a long reading, and I

observed that Mr. Rosse had put down his meerschaum, and sat forward on his chair, as if ready for a move, so I stopped.

"If the Admiral, your honoured father, had known, Frank," said he, "what a risk there was in sending a young man into that 'Island of Saints,' I think he would have preferred to keep you at home and lose his mortgage—for it seems, in saving that, he had nearly lost his son. And I suppose, Frank, as an Irishman might observe, before you have finished your story you will be killed yet—for that squireen, as they call him, seems a low, good-for-nothing, dangerous fellow."

"I hope, sir," said I, "that you still do not disapprove of my conduct towards Miss Donovan?"

"Well, as for that, I do and I do not. What business had you to fall in love at all? Did not you promise your father that you would not? For if you had kept quiet at home and looked after the farm, nothing of all this might have happened, and the girl might either have left the country, or been satisfied to accept the lover, chance had provided for her. She seems rather low game for Admiral Wyville's son to fly at, I must confess. But this love——"

"Is strong as death, sir!" interrupted I.

"Is it? I never found it so."

"Because you, fortunately perhaps, never met a Mary Donovan. To marry her, at present at least, is I know out of the question, but I assure you, sir, I shall never love any one else."

"Psha!—all nonsense! In a short

time, Frank, you will wonder at yourself, for you will care as little about this Mary Donovan as she will about you. There are other pretty women in the world, and in the words of our great bard—

> 'Even as one heat another heat expels,
> Or as one nail by strength drives out another,
> So the remembrance of your former love
> Will be, by a newer object quite forgotten.'"

CHAPTER VII.

"I will marry you if ever I marry woman."
As You Like It.

Eager to know that Mary Donovan was safe, and anxious also to place her under the kind protection of the D'Arcies, I rode the next day to Rathlynn, having taken a friendly leave of Phil and Denis, and presented a substantial acknowledgment of their services, which, however, they declined to receive.

"By dad! that was a dirty business

of the squireen's entirely," said Phil, "and he was no man that could stand by and see a young woman, and she a stranger in the counthry, so trated. But that young Fitzpatrick has a fancy he can do as he likes with the women, and if it's the fine figure he has, egad! he's the gift to know it, too. He suspects that Denis had a hand in his troubles, for says he to me yesterday, 'Go along wid you, you double-distilled sthrap, with your pay-jacket and buckskin gaiters; it's the black news you shall hear some o' these days in return for all the good ye done me.' 'Oh,' says I, 'by the same token, little your threats frighten me, man, for it's hen-hearted you are, and the Sacchenach gintleman has made a mull of you twice, and is ready to do it again, so spare your threats for them that don't

know ye, murthering rap that ye are!'"

"Well, sure, this passed in the market-place, and all the boys laughed, and the squireen gave me just such a look as he gave your honor when you left the Castle. He's a broth of a boy, but he's met his match at last, and got his desarts, and no mistake, eh, Denis?"

Denis assented, but added somewhat seriously—

"He'll do us a sly turn yet if he can, and so both his honour and ourselves should be on the look-out for a squall."

So we parted, and I shall ever retain a grateful remembrance of the high-minded and honourable conduct of these "rough, rug-headed kerns."

To describe the delight with which I was welcomed at home by Mrs. Doran and Nelly is impossible. Poor Nelly,

who was a kind-hearted, faithful creature, sobbed with very pleasure, and said "she never expected to see the master alive any more."

"Och, sure! we heard your honor was gone to fight young Master Fitzpatrick with only the two boys and Larry, and he with a hundred men at his back, and we knew he'd a heavy spite agin you for the bating you gave him and the young O'Toole on Mullikeen Bridge. And then to be so long and not a word o' news, except that they'd shut your honor up in an old Tower, and that you wor going to blow it up and the young woman in it before you would give in to the cowardly spalpeens. I told Larry when he came I would give him the spre' na skillenagh that Dan McBride hung round my neck with a

blue ribbon on Saint Barnabas Day, if he'd only stop and tell us all about the 'brieuliagh,' but he first tould us enough to frighten us, and then, the vagabone! he cocked his 'caubeen' on one side of his ugly head, and off he went on 'important business,' he said, the little pipe-sucking dhring that he is! Sure, master, it's a joyful day to us all to see you safe; and they say that Niel the piper will be down this evening to give you a welcome, and, och! but he's the man to make the pipes spake to perfection!"

All this sounds strange to our English ear, but to get on comfortably with this warm-hearted people, you must lay aside all the rigidity of English manners, and rather consider those around you in the light of friends and intimates than as mere dependents and inferiors. I know

that many of their own gentry treat their servants more like dogs than human beings, but that cannot win their love, and among this impulsive people there is seldom a medium between love and hatred. Necessity, indeed, may make them submissive, and generally does, but there can be no union of interests between master and slave—no community of feeling—no self-sacrifice for each other's interests. I was much touched at the simple expression of a poor fellow who almost lost his own life in preserving that of his master.

"Sure," said he, "did he not always give me the kind word?"

Larry informed me that Miss Donovan, immediately on her arrival at Donegal, had hired a car, and dismissing Phil and Denis, proceeded with him and

Norah to the Priest's house, in the hope of still finding her father alive, and it was only on her arrival there that the melancholy truth was made known to her. As Father Roche could not, under the circumstances, accommodate her, he took her himself to the Hotel, and placed her under the immediate charge of Mrs. Connell, than whom she could not have found a kinder or more considerate friend and protector.

As I felt it would be premature to call, till the lapse of a few days had somewhat tranquillized her feelings, I rowed up the Lough to Doonore, and spent a day with the D'Arcies. The Colonel was now returned, and I found him indignant beyond measure at the conduct of the Fitzpatricks.

"It is," continued he, "a most mys-

terious affair. I saw the father only yesterday, and he brazened the thing out with his usual effrontery. He did not find fault with his son, except that he had not blown out your brains, Wyville, as the due and proper reward of your interference. The whole matter surprised me, for the Corrigans are deeply affronted, and consider the whole affair as a public and personal insult to themselves. I happen to know that the Fitzpatricks are altogether in their power, and that there are circumstances which, if brought forward, would involve them in moral and pecuniary ruin."

To me it was still more a mystery, for, after the very decided and almost frantic opposition made by Florence to her brother's connection with Mary Donovan, it was

passing strange that she should so soon and so decidedly change her feelings and course of action. I found the Miss D'Arcies full of anxieties about their new friend, and they begged that I would join my influence with theirs to induce Mary to take up her abode for the present at Doonore.

A week had now elapsed, and I ventured to ride down to the hotel. Mrs. Connell welcomed me warmly, as she always did.

"Mr. Wyville," said she, "what risks you have been running! It was a shameful business to take a young lady, and she too a stranger, from her dying father in the dead o' the night. But all the country blesses you for defending that poor,

friendless orphan as she now is, but, by the same token, they do not think there's an end of the scrimmage yet. That Ryan, that used to live at Rathlynn, is a desperate fellow, and cares for nothing; and it was to spite you he undertook this bad business, for they all said that the young lady had promised you to be mistress at Rathlynn, and to marry the master in spite of all the Fitzpatricks in the county Donegal." Mrs. Connell looked me slyly in the face, and smiled. "Well, you need not be ashamed, I am sure, Mr. Wyville, for though she does not come from a high stock, I suppose, and has not a farthing, she's the sweetest young woman that ever I saw—'as wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove,' as

Mr. Roche said to me when he brought her. Wise as a serpent she may be, but it seems she is not so very harmless, for she sets the whole country a-fighting for her, and there will be lives lost yet, if the magistrates don't take it up as they ought to do."

"Will you kindly take up my compliments to Miss Donovan," said I, not caring to reply to Mrs. Connell's long speech, "and say I should be glad if she would allow me a few minutes' conversation."

"And it's right glad she'll be to see you, poor thing, that I know," said the kind-hearted landlady, "for she likes nothing so well as to hear me talking of you."

I entered the private parlour which adjoined Mrs. Connell's room, and there

I found Mary Donovan. She was in deep mourning. She was very pale, and the habiliments of sorrow set off the almost dazzling fairness of her complexion. Her luxuriant hair was elegantly disposed, and confined by a simple band of black velvet. Her dress and general appearance suprised me—she seemed no longer the poor peasant girl of Ballybog, so ladylike she appeared though everything she wore was simple and inexpensive. I at once attributed this change to her kind and benevolent landlady. And yet, I know not how it was, I felt as if I almost wished to see her in the plain printed dress and the long blue cloak of former times. But I had not a moment for speculations

of this sort Mary rose and met me as I advanced, but her emotion choked her utterance; she merely took my hand, and after an attempt to speak she resumed her seat.

I waited for some time in order that she might compose herself, and then expressed my condolence on the sad loss she had sustained.

"And indeed it is a loss to me, though I trust it is a gain to him. There was nothing in store for us but poverty and destitution, and we could not expect that good fortune in foreign lands which was denied to us here. My dear father's life was not happy—he had nothing to live for, but I feel his loss; those cares and attentions I have been in the habit of paying are no

longer needed, and I feel as if the great object of my existence was removed."

"Time will mitigate these feelings," said I, soothingly; "even now, matters of great importance press upon your attention. It is to consult with you upon your future plans that I am here to-day."

"Future plans! Alas! all is dark before me. I know nothing further but that I am an orphan, and must battle with the world as I best may. But I have confidence in Him whose Almighty Power has hitherto preserved me."

"But you are not friendless and unprotected—there are those whose only wish it is to promote your happiness and comfort! The family at Doonore

are anxiously expecting you to take up your residence with them. If I might presume to advise, this is the most prudent step you can take."

"Your advice, Mr. Wyville, must ever command my grateful attention; but I am in no position to associate with people of rank and fortune. I must, and with God's help I will, earn my own living."

"But how? This is a mere delusion, as you are now situated. Have you formed any plans?"

"None—I am waiting for letters which may decide my future movements."

"My dear Mary—oh, pardon me if I appear to address you too freely, but I cannot address you otherwise than as a very dear friend—it would be impertinent in me to pry into your affairs; but only

say, have you friends elsewhere who are able and willing to assist you?"

After some hesitation, and casting her eyes upon the ground as if pondering, she replied,—

"Yes, able—but whether willing or not I cannot yet tell. Till I have ascertained this, I wish to remain with my kind Mrs. Connell."

"Then you will not go to America?"

"Indeed I know not. Oh, Mr. Wyville, do not accuse me of ingratitude; but there are circumstances I cannot reveal even to you—indeed, I am not fully enlightened myself. I do not think I shall ever be more than what I have always been, poor and dependent."

Who could have seen the expression of those beautiful eyes, as for a moment they met my gaze, and not have for-

gotten all else but the lovely and interesting being that sat before him? I felt at that moment that all my happiness was bound up in her, and that to allow one so beautiful and so innocent to go forth into the world without a protector and a guide would be certain hazard, if not ultimate ruin.

"Mary," said I, passionately, "that must not be. You shall be neither poor nor dependent. You are not friendless, for I am your friend—you are not poor, for I have enough for both. Be mine—shelter yourself from the world's frowns in that bosom that is open to receive you. Once united to me, my whole life shall be spent in securing your happiness. You know not how long and how dearly I have loved you!"

She hid her face in her handkerchief,

and her bosom heaved with violent emotion.

It was long before she was composed enough to speak, and, when she did, her feelings frequently interrupted her utterance.

"For your generosity—your marvellous kindness towards me, I can never, dear Mr. Wyville, sufficiently thank you; and be assured my heart overflows with gratitude, and ever will while I have life. Your offer to connect yourself with a poor and obscure girl like myself is a noble sacrifice to generous feeling. You know well, were we circumstanced differently, what my resolve would be; but we are not always to consult merely our inclinations, and I should feel myself guilty of the basest ingratitude to you, did I take advantage of a state of feeling which,

though you may not now think so, might soon calm down to something more practical and prudent. No, Mr. Wyville, I never can be yours—I may not even contemplate such happiness—your family would never receive me, and I could not live to be looked upon as an inferior and an intruder. Your own good sense will soon point out the impropriety and impolicy of such a step."

That these words were uttered with deep and trembling emotion, somewhat soothed my disappointment. I felt that Mary Donovan returned my love, and that was half the battle. But all my persuasions were vain—I could not shake her resolution—and the utmost I could wring from her was a promise to let me know where she was, and to accept my services

if she needed them. Knowing that she had no pecuniary resources, yet fearful that she would accept no such assistance from me, I arranged confidentially with Mrs. Connell to supply all her wants as a loan from herself, and as there were many valuables among her late father's effects which amply secured even any small sums she might require, the case at once assumed the aspect of a mere matter of business.

I was the more pleased with this arrangement, as Mrs. Connell said she did not hesitate to act upon it, and she had already most liberally rewarded all those who had been concerned in her rescue. I may perhaps except myself, for I was both uneasy and unhappy. I feared something might occur to anni-

hilate my hopes and deprive me of her for ever.

With a slow and unwilling step I descended the stairs after my interview with her I so deeply loved—and it was with almost a feeling of anger that I found myself waylaid by my old friend Dignum, who hurried me at once into his parlour.

"And so, my dear boy," said he, giving me a startling slap on the back, "you have cracked the two thickest skulls in the county—Archibald's, and that imp of the devil, Ryan's! You are freely excused from duelling now; no one will doubt either your courage or your capabilities. Egad! Wyville, but you have had a smart affair on the Sligo border. Let me hear all about it."

He rung the bell, called for the glasses

and "material," and even at that early hour—for it was hardly past noon—began compounding the punch. I knew that he was to be trusted, and so I told him the whole story. When I had finished, he paused for some time, with the unsqueezed lemon in his hand.

"By all the powers!" at length he exclaimed—"why this beats Bannagher! Those Fitzpatricks are either mad, or there's something at the bottom that we are not up to. All the hopes of the family were fixed on that match with Julia Corrigan, and now they pitch her to the devil! If the daughter was in it, the father, you may depend upon it, was in it too—for she can manage both father and mother—and even her cub of a brother does not dare to cross her too much or too often. Well, it's puzzled I

am, and no mistake; but something will come up, you may depend upon it, that we little expect. I wonder what the Corrigans will do, or whether that scheming old rap, the father, will be able to smooth things down again. But how is this, Wyville? They say you intend to marry that mountain maid—egad! you're a sly dog!—it's little I have seen of her, for Mother Connell watches me like a cat, and never lets her walk out except in her company. But I have had a glimpse, and such a gait, and such a foot and ankle, I never yet saw out o' Limerick, where beauties are as plenty as potatoes. But what will the old gentleman at home say? How will he like the paragraph in the paper—'Married by banns, Frank Wyville, Esq., to Mary Donovan, of Ballybog!' 'Here's an Irish

girl and no mistake,' will all your friends in London say, and you will hear in every club that Frank Wyville, only son of the great Admiral, has married the barefooted beauty of Ballybog! Eh! eh! eh!"

And so the worthy sportsman went on "chaffing" me, as he called it, till the punch was pronounced "elegant" and luncheon was ordered in.

The subject was one too painful to me even to speak about, much less to joke upon, and so I took my friend's jibes quietly, and made no response.

"But come, Wyville—how is this?" said he, suddenly confronting me. "Am I to suppose by your not answering my questions, that you are really going to be fool enough to marry a country girl without a penny? No, no—I'll never

believe it! By dad! if I thought so, I'd tip the Admiral a hint by the next post."

"No need of this," replied I, anxious the subject should be dropped; "Miss Donovan is not at all inclined, I believe, to marry any one."

"The greater fool she, then. It's little sense she has, if she does not make her market when she can, and her only excuse for not having Archibald Fitzpatrick is that she has bagged better game in the form of an English gentleman, the only son of a rich Admiral. By the same token, this young mountaineer knows how to throw her fly well—but it's a taking hackle she's got, we must allow, and I give her credit for having hooked such a fine fresh fish. No blame to her for that anyhow. So here's her health!"

"As you will persist in putting a wrong construction on Miss Donovan's conduct, I can tell you a secret if you can keep it."

"So I will, except from Mrs. Connell —I tell her everything."

"Well, then, Miss Donovan has refused me."

"The back o' my hand and the sole o' my foot to you! Don't tell me such gammon as that, or to the Dioul I'll pitch you, man alive. Refused *you*—don't tell me such nonsense as that, and expect I am such an ommadawn as to believe you."

"You may believe it or not as you choose, but it is a fact."

"Then the girl is mad or silly, or perhaps she is imitating the custom of some of your English women, who say

no when they mean *yes*. Refuse you? —it is impossible; there's some mistake, depend upon it."

"There is no mistake; language could not be plainer or more decided."

"Well, then, she's a fool for her pains, and you're a lucky man to get out of the scrape. Show the blood of the Wyvilles, Frank agra, and walk off coolly with your hands in your breeches pockets, and let her know she's done the kindest thing on earth for you."

"That is just what she thinks: she will not enter a family where there is any doubt of her reception."

The old sportsman almost dropped the glass he was putting to his lips, and stared me some time in the face.

"You are a truth-telling fellow," said he, deliberately, "or I should take the

whole matter as a devilish bad joke. But if it is as you say, and I must believe you, she's the gra gal o' the world! Won't enter a family where there's a doubt of her being well received. Egad! she's a noble girl that, and if I was a young man I'd try my luck at a cast myself. At her again, Frank, my boy—she's worth the trouble of coorting. Don't fancy that because the fish won't look at the first fly, he will refuse the second—never show the 'garran bane,' but change your tackle, and I'll go bail you'll gaff the prize."

"I don't think I shall take your advice. Miss Donovan knows her own mind, and it would be equally indelicate and fruitless for me to press my suit further. She has not a spark of affec-

tation or conceit in her nature, and she does not say anything she does not mean."

"I have no doubt she's the jewel of the world—bright as the sun and chaste as the moon; but there are more fish in the sea, that's one comfort, and there's many a nice girl on this side the water that would buckle-to, without thinking what the old gentleman would say to it —so don't break your heart about it anyhow."

Mrs. Connell's entrance put an end to this somewhat unpleasant conversation, for I could not feel offended with Dignum, for I well knew it was far from his intention to say one word he thought could hurt my feelings. I thanked the kind landlady for all her attention to Miss Donovan, and placed a

note of value in her hand as an acknow ledgment for the trouble and expense she had been put to."

"No, Mr. Wyville," said she, with a half-offended air, "I will take nothing till the young lady chooses to arrange with me herself, commencing with this day. She is welcome to anything I may have done for her, even if she had not been the angel she is, for never did a gentler creature ever enter my door. She has all the ways of a perfect lady about her, though she is a poor man's daughter, and comes from Ballybog—the end of the world. Besides, is she not an orphan, Mr. Wyville?—oh, it's a pleasure, indeed, it is to be allowed to help the fatherless and the widow." Mrs. Connell put the corner of her apron to her

eyes, and the old sportsman looked serious.

I was myself deeply affected at a warmth of feeling and a kindly sympathy, by no means uncommon in this poor, and by some despised land. Mrs. Connell, though she had a family to bring up—was herself a young widow, and had to battle with the hard world, yet had ever a heart to feel for others, and the ready hand to relieve them. I never think of her without the sincerest respect, and a wish that it may please God to give her prosperity and peace.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Therefore to horse; and let us not be dainty of leave-taking, but shift away."

Macbeth.

As I rode homeward I felt restless and perplexed. The more I saw of Mary, the more I loved her, and my affection was not a mere ephemeral admiration, but was based on a thorough and deep respect for her character, and her many endearing qualities. She was one on whom you felt you could *rely* that she was worthy

of the most unbounded confidence; for though her affections were warm, and the varying expression of her beautiful eyes proclaimed great internal feeling, yet her manner and conversation betrayed such excellent judgment and so refined a delicacy, that I came to the conclusion that some persons possessed natural gifts which education itself could not improve. In her there was a softness and a firmness combined—the former won your love, the latter enforced your respect.

It is a rare conjunction, but one too striking not to command admiration wherever it exists. The more I conversed with her, the more was I struck with the general pertinence of her remarks. There was, too, a sweet cheerfulness and repose of

character about her, strongly indicative of purity of heart, and she had the happy faculty of discerning and appreciating all that was good and beautiful.

Peasant girl as she was, destitute of accomplishments, and untutored in the ways of the world, yet I felt that I could never be happy with any other woman—that she was all my warmest fancy had ever pictured of the beautiful and the good, and when Florence Fitzpatrick occurred to my mind, with her raven locks, her fine pencilled brows, her Norma-like figure, and her reserved and haughty bearing, the comparison was disparaging indeed; both were of excelling beauty, but the one was an angel—the other a spirit of fire?

"Mary must, and she shall be mine," was my stern resolve as I dashed over the Bridge of Rathlynn, nor checked my mare till we were mounting a steep and rugged eminence not far from the Lough. "Shall and must," I reiterated, as my father's warning and my own promise forced themselves upon my unwilling recollection. Alas! what could I do? What a position was mine! I well knew my father would never consent to my union with what he would denominate an "Irish pauper;" his eyes would be closed to her merits, indeed he would never trouble himself to discover them. I was entirely dependent upon him, and unfortunately had not embraced any profession that would give me an honourable and ample maintenance.

To propose any clandestine measure to Mary would, I knew, be only to outrage her feelings—already twice so strongly expressed—therefore, though I felt assured that I was anything but indifferent to her, I saw no present hope of success. What the future might do for me, I knew not—that future as far as she was concerned seemed gloomy and uncertain.

I alighted at my own door, dissatisfied and unhappy. Mrs. Doran met me as I entered the house. She seemed different in her manner, and in bad spirits, and ushered me into the parlour without saying a word.

"What is the matter?" said I, turning full towards her.

"The matter is it—why no matter at all, your honor, except that I am

very uneasy, and it's the black news I hear about you. They say you are going to be married to that young woman who lived at Ballybog, and that we shall have a mistress here very soon. That's all — that's the matter, and bad enough sure it is;" and the poor woman lifted up her voice and wept audibly.

"Mrs. Doran," said I, angrily, "have you lived so long in this country, and believe every idle report you hear? —I am not intending to place any new mistress over my establishment here, so you may spare both your tears and your reproaches."

"God bless you, sir, for that same —it's the good word you have spoken; so Nelly and I will be happy again. It's all that idle sthrap of a Larry

that tould us. Sure it's a barrow-full we've had of troubles; poor Nelly and I have not had a comfortable night's rest since your honor began this scrimmage with them at the Mount. I know what they are, and so does everybody else except yourself, or you would never have put your foot inside that threshold."

"I am somewhat of your opinion, Mrs. Doran; but now I have done with them, and mean to attend to my own business, if I can."

"It's as welcome as the first note of a spring-bird, Master, to hear you talk so, and I only wish you may find that you *have* done with them. Larry Lanigan and the boys all say that your life has been in danger ever since you broke off with Miss Florence."

"What do they know about my breaking off with Miss Fitzpatrick? If Larry does not hold his tongue, I will break his head for his pains. As I was never a suitor of Miss Fitzpatrick, it is impossible I could break off with her; I have no quarrel with her, nor ever had I."

"Well, to be sure, it is a lying world we live in!" exclaimed Mrs. Doran as she left the room, "and I do believe all these reports that have made us so uneasy are nothing but falsehoods after all."

The following morning I rode down to the Hotel again. I felt it impossible to resist the fascinating influence of Mary Donovan, and though I well knew it was only making matters worse for both of us, I became the mere creature

of an irresistible impulse. Mary was in her room, but Mrs. Connell was with her, nor did she quit the room while I stopped, so that the conversation was necessarily general and my position tantalizing. I soon rose and left, but was joined by Mrs. Connell when I entered the parlour below.

"Miss Donovan desired me to stay, but I had rather been a hundred miles off, Mr. Wyville, than to have stood so in the way."

"It is her wish, Mrs. Connell, and you acted very properly. It is very manifest that my attentions are displeasing to her."

"Well, it's the oddest thing," said the landlady, "that I ever knew. Why, it is as clear to me as that white is not black, that she loves no one else but you.

When she talks of all the kindness you have shown her and her poor father, those beautiful eyes of hers sparkle like diamonds, but when she talks of leaving the country soon, she lets the tears run down, and sighs as if her heart would break. And then when I sit down by her and mention your name, she will lay aside her book or her work, and she would listen all night, if I would only be praising you and telling all your doings in the country. If ever a man was loved by a woman to the heart's core, it is yourself! In these matters it is not easy to deceive our sex. Why she acts so distant and coy you know better than I do, but she has some good reason, I am sure, for it pains her as much, or more than it does you."

"You are right, Mrs. Connell—she has

a reason that shows her high sense of honour, and exalts the worthiness of her character even beyond the beauty of her person. It is unfortunate as matters now stand—if I could only think she would be as faithful to me as I intend to be to her, I should have hope that all might yet be well."

"As to that, of course I can say nothing: it does not seem likely that she should waste all her youth in looking for what may never come. After all, Mr. Wyville, perhaps everything is for the best. We generally find it so."

This was indeed but cold comfort, and yet the knowledge that Mary Donovan returned my love was soothing to my irritated feelings, and led me almost to hope that there might be by-and-by some favourable solution to all these difficulties.

Three weeks had now elapsed since my return from Donegal, and in that interval I had several times called at the Hotel —but on no occasion after the first did I see Mary alone. Mrs. Connell was always in the room while I stayed.

One morning early, as I was dressing with my door open, Larry's voice was heard scolding Nelly, who was at her usual ablutions at the steps near the front door.

"Thunder and turf! if you do not go upstairs, I will go myself, so don't be so teetotally contrary, Nelly, avick, I want to see the master very bad entirely."

Calling to Larry to wait a few minutes, I hurried down, curious to know what was the news now.

"I ran up to tell you, master, that I saw a car going through Mullikeen yesterday evening, and I'll swear Miss

Donovan and a gentleman and Norah were upon it."

"Impossible!" exclaimed I; "it was only the day before I saw Miss Donovan, and she said nothing about her intention of leaving."

"By gor then, master, it's true, for I saw it with my own eyes."

In a short time I was at the door of the Hotel, having galloped all the way, and as soon as she saw me, Mrs. Connell called me into her parlour, and shut the door cautiously.

"Yes," said she, "you need not ask, she's gone, and it was not for me to stop her, and she gave me no opportunity of sending up to you, for it seemed as if all was ready beforehand. Her boxes were packed, and she started almost before I had recovered myself."

"And did she seem in a hurry to go? —was she pleased to leave you?"

"Pleased, poor dear! no. She cried as if she was heartbroken, and just before she left, she fell on my neck, and I thought she would have fainted, but her tears and sobs relieved her."

"And did she leave no message for me?"

"Yes, indeed, and here it is. She must have written it in the night, for she had no time after the messenger came."

"And who was he?"

"Indeed I cannot tell. He was elderly and very respectable-looking, and seemed very kind and respectful to her."

"And did Norah accompany her?"

"Oh, yes! and she was very fond of Norah, and Norah said she would go

to the end of the world with her if she never got a farthing of wage. Indeed there was not a person in the house that would not have done anything for her —she was so loved by us all. I shall miss her sweet face sadly, but I told her she could never want a home while I had one."

Mrs. Connell gave me the note, and I retired into the parlour she had so recently occupied to read it alone. It ran thus—

"I fear I shall appear very ungrateful to you, my kindest friend. But I act under an overwhelming sense of duty. My future is so uncertain, that I can give you no satisfactory information. I can only hope that my efforts will ensure me an independence, however humble. If we never meet more, which, considering

the inequality of our conditions, is most probable, sometimes remember her who will never forget her debt of gratitude to you. May every blessing be yours. Adieu!"

The feelings with which I read this note were intense. Those only who have loved as I did, can realize the agony of mind I experienced in thus losing the first and dearest object of my affections. There was something so decisive in the wording of this note, that I did not, could not, mistake its meaning, and the bitter disappointment of my sanguine expectations was only equalled by the admiration I could not but feel at a course of action at once so noble and unselfish. Yet this only increased the anguish I endured—for to lose, and for ever, such a one as Mary Donovan,

merely from disparity of fortune and station, almost drove me to distraction. I felt that I could joyfully for her sake have endured the scorn of the world—the anger of friends, even poverty itself; there was no earthly consideration that could have tempted me to relinquish her. Then the thought came across me that Mary knew my weakness and the recklessness of my affection, and she set me the example of a self-control of which I had proved myself incapable.

Long did I pace the room with hurried and unequal steps, deeply did I consider what I could do—I read and re-read her note, wondering that a mere peasant girl, uneducated, and ignorant of the world, could pen such a production — kind, yet decided — tender yet discreet. At length Mrs. Connell

joined me, and I had no hesitation in making her my confidante, and it somewhat soothed my feelings to talk over matters with her, and ease my aching heart.

"Don't despair," said my kind hostess, "a woman's love is as strong as death, and that you had won her whole heart I am certain. Well, to be sure, it's wonderful! only think of a poor unprotected girl refusing an offer of marriage from the man she loved dearly, and that man Mr. Wyville! I would not have trusted myself, in my young days, to do such a thing—little should I have cared for father, mother, or friends, if poor Connell, my husband, had been a lord, and I a barmaid. I know I should have had him at once."

"But," said I, "her motives are pure and upright, Mrs. Connell."

"That they are, and sorra a thing else! She knew all about your family —their wealth and their pride, and their old ancestry, and that you were dependent upon them for everything;— those nice young ladies the Miss D'Arcies told her, and on my life, I think all those accounts alarmed her, not so much for herself as for you."

Under these circumstances of the case I was puzzled what to do. My first impulse was to trace her out, and follow her, but then the thought came over me, that I had no right, after repeated refusals, to press my presence upon her; it could do no good, but might give pain and create annoyance. And still, was I to lose her thus? She might have informed me of her plans, and I could have assisted

them. On calmer reflection I felt, however, there was nothing for it but patience, and to await the course of events. She had promised to write to Mrs. Connell, and I must for the present be satisfied with that only chance of gleaning information.

Several weeks had now elapsed, and nothing material occurred. The winter was passing away, and my old friend Dignum was frequently with me, preparing for the opening of the fishing season. I still felt restless, and one day I rode over to call upon Father Roche. I found him hospitable and kind as usual. But in answer to my inquiries about Miss Donovan, he only shook his head and declared that she had acted without either consulting him, or making him ac-

quainted with her plans. He said that her mother had relations in the British possessions in North America, and that it was not improbable she had joined them, as she and her father had proposed previous to his death. He knew no other way in which she could meet with protection. He should, however, doubtless hear from her, as she was a good and virtuous girl, and had been a devoted daughter to an eccentric and unmanagable parent, and had always treated him (the priest) with respect and confidence, though she made no secret of her aversion to his tenets. Here was another chance of gaining information. I became more satisfied to wait a little and to see what might turn up.

But what, all this time, had become of the Fitzpatricks? Since the affair at the old Tower, nothing had been heard of Archibald, but his father and mother were gone to Belfast, on a visit to some friends, and it was probable he was with them, waiting till matters were quiet again in the country. Thady Houligan was committed to prison by Colonel D'Arcie, on the charge of purloining, or attempting to purloin his late master's property, and his daughter was gone off, it was said, to America, with one of the fellows who assisted in the abduction of Miss Donovan.

But a storm was brewing in more quarters than one, which ultimately caused the family at the Mount bitterly to repent the course they had taken.

As I spent much time at Doonore, I heard many particulars that were not generally known, and amongst others that the Corrigans were quietly taking steps to avenge the insult their daughter had received. Indeed, the Corrigans were, in their way, very worthy people, but possessing considerable wealth, had their fair share of that pride and sense of consequence which is the natural result of such a position in a poverty-stricken country. They often invited me to their house, and I willingly accepted their invitations, and a degree of intimacy sprung up which I believe was relished on both sides. No allusion, however, was ever made to the Fitzpatricks, nor did Miss Julia, though a free-spoken and open-hearted girl, ever mention Archibald's name to me. She

did not appear to feel her loss as much as I expected, but probably thought, and rightly too, that with her expectations a better match would be forthcoming. Where Florence was I knew not. I feared to inquire, and her name was not coupled with that of her father or brother, when they were spoken of by the D'Arcies.

About this time I received a letter from my sister. She spoke most highly of young D'Arcie, and recommended me to cultivate a close intimacy with the family, as they bore a most excellent character in Northamptonshire, where they had a residence and a considerable estate. I smiled at this needless recommendation, and fancied that she had more reasons than one for urging the intimacy. She added that my father had

been unwell with a very severe fit of his old enemy the gout, and that she believed as soon as he was able to write, it was his intention to recall me, that I might give an account of my stewardship. Her letter continued thus--

"We shall be curious to hear an account of your adventures in the far west; but I suppose they will consist in successes or failures in the crops, the good or bad conduct of labourers, and the usual agricultural statistics. I told my father that his imposition of three conditions had, I was sure, been quite unnecessary—for that if you had the will you had not the opportunity, either of gaming, fighting a duel, or marrying an Irish girl in that remote place. By-the-bye, you know, the D'Arcies are Northamptonshire people."

CHAPTER IX.

"Farewell at once—for once, for all and ever."
Richard II.

One morning when the wind blew warmly from the west, considering the time of the year, and the sky was cloudy and dull, Larry sent Nelly to tell me that he wished to speak with me in the yard. On going out I found he was preparing the tackle for a day's sport, and had got my favourite rod in hand, lashing the joints together.

"By dad, master," said he, not looking

off his work, "there are two fresh salmon in the middle pool, and so I have got all ready nearly, for they must never see the Lough above, anyhow."

It was about two miles off, and I at once set out. Long and patiently did I whip the pool in every part—changed my flies—waited for a favourable ripple on the surface, and tried every device to allure these wary tenants of the river: but in vain. Larry said positively that I rose one of twenty pounds at least, but, as I saw nothing of it myself, I set it down as the usual exaggeration, and that the wish was father to the thought.

Tired with my want of success, I threw my rod to Larry, and was climbing the hill to the road above in order to return home, when he said in a careless tone,

"If your honour has nothing particular to do this blessed morning, Mrs. Bridget Cooney would, I think, be glad of a little coshering. She tould me a few days agone that you were shy of her, and she such a friend to you."

And Bridget spoke truly—I had not seen her since the affair in Donegal, for though I had called twice, she was out on her usual mission. Accordingly, I dismissed Larry, and took the path along the river side to the well-known cabin of the cosherer. It did not rain much, but low and heavy clouds were blown up from the sea, and wild wailings and dying sobs were heard among the stunted trees and hedges as I hurried on.

I reached the cabin, and, as usual, all was still. I listened at the door, but there was no sound within—Bridget was

probably out on her calling. However, I lifted the latch, and to my surprise the door opened and I entered.

By the turf fire sat a female, wrapped in the common cloak of the country, whom I at once greeted as Bridget Cooney. I was soon undeceived—the cloak was suddenly thrown back, and to my, I had almost said horror, I saw before me Florence Fitzpatrick!

In my surprise I ejaculated her name, and retreated at once to the door.

"I beg you a thousand pardons," said I, hastily. "Had I known you were here, I should not have ventured to intrude."

"Nor had I the slightest conception I should meet you here," retorted she, "or I certainly should not have thrown myself in your way. You cannot suppose, Mr. Wyville, that this meeting is volun-

tary on my part, any more than I presume it is on yours?"

I perceived the colour mantling on her cheek, and answered at once—

"Certainly not; I have had no reason at any time to doubt Miss Fitzpatrick's word, least of all now."

A pause awkward to both succeeded, and I placed my hand upon the latch with the intention of leaving the place.

"As we *have* met, do not let us part thus!" said she, while her voice trembled with suppressed emotion; "it is well perhaps to have a few last words—the reflection may be grateful to us both hereafter—I do not wish to part in anger."

"And why should we?" replied I, drawing a chair, and seating myself near her—"we have unfortunately had oppos-

ing interests, but even in your very opposition I found you generous."

As I said this, she looked me full in the face, as if surprised, and then rejoined—

"Generous?—how?—it is you, not I, that can claim that honourable epithet. Alas! I was too much hurried forward by circumstances to manage matters as I wished."

"I have good reason to know," said I, "that you forbade any personal violence to myself, and with a praiseworthy delicacy you provided that Miss Donovan should have a female as the companion of her abduction."

"I know not how you get your information," said she, again blushing deeply, "but certainly we have been foiled, even in our own neighbourhood,

and by a foreigner, too, like yourself—a very unusual thing in this country. However, you have triumphed; and deep laid schemes, in which I confess that, to a certain degree, I participated, have been baffled and overthrown by you. Well, you have gained the end you had in view, and I suppose your marriage with that young peasant girl at Ballybog will not be long delayed."

She spoke this in a tone of bitter irony, and her face was pale as death itself.

"Miss Donovan," I replied, "has left the country. I know not whither she has gone—it is probable I may never see her more."

She rose hastily, and approaching me, threw her dark, kindling eyes on my face, and seemed as if she would read my very thoughts.

"Gone?—and you do not know where? God be thanked! I shall now feel happier!" and she sunk into her chair, and hid her face in the folds of her cloak.

"You are wrong, Miss Fitzpatrick," said I, gently, "in fostering such feelings towards one who never injured you, at least intentionally. And now she *is* gone past recall, why should you harbour any resentment?"

"Why? You, Mr. Wyville, do not know how much she has injured us—not me only, but *us*—my father, mother, brother, and yourself."

"But she did not even know you—she wished to live quietly and unmolested, and but for your brother she would have done so."

"And she is gone!" exclaimed she, as if half to herself, and not heeding

what I was saying—"she is gone! and oh! may she be at the antipodes, at the furthest end of the whole earth, so that I never see, never hear of her again! I hate her!"

As she said this, she looked me full in the face with an expression I shall never forget, and I felt the truth of the remark once made to me—that if the Milesians could love passionately, they could hate bitterly. I was sorry, very sorry, for there was much about Florence that was noble and good—at present she certainly did not exhibit these qualities.

As if overcome with her own emotions, she bowed her head on her bosom, and for some time remained silent and abstracted. Feeling the extreme awkwardness of this interview, I rose to depart, when she again raised her head, placed

her hand upon my arm, and motioned me to be again seated.

"I will not detain you long, Mr. Wyville," said she, impatiently brushing away the tears that trembled on her cheek, "but let us not part in anger—*that* I could not bear—it would add to the thousand pangs that already almost break my heart. Our family is ruined—utterly ruined—the last stake was played and lost. My father, mother, and brother are supposed to be in Belfast, but I may tell you, they are on their way across the Atlantic. That desperate companion of Archibald's, and his instructor in folly and vice, Mr. Ryan, accompanies them; he feared the punishment that would overtake him for his violence towards you, and injured as he was by the chastisement he so justly received at

your hands, he has left the scene of his crimes for ever!"

"And you, Florence?"

"Me? I remain in the country where I was born. I would not go. Ryan pestered me with his detested addresses, and my father and brother favoured his suit. That was enough. I would not trust myself with them in the backwoods of America?"

"But where will you dwell?—where find protection? If you would condescend—if I could assist you——"

"You have a kind and a noble heart, Mr. Wyville, and God will bless you for it. But my plans are formed—I go to Dublin, where I have friends, and they have gladly consented to receive me."

"I hope you will be happy and prosperous; and if in anything, I have,

however unwittingly, stood in your path, forgive me, for I would never willingly have caused you a moment's pain."

"I know it—you need no forgiveness from me—indeed you have been the victim of my folly. But, oh! Mr. Wyville, will you, can you, forgive *me?* If you knew all, you would forgive and you would pity me too. May I ask that we continue friends, and that all that has been unfortunate or disagreeable in our intercourse may be forgotten?—forgiven I am sure it is."

"Indeed, Florence, there is nothing for me to forgive. You had great temptation to act the part you did—it was catching at a straw to save your family, and though I cannot read nor yet comprehend all your motives, I am sure they were strong——"

"As death!" interrupted she, emphatically—"but enough of this," she added, more calmly; "I shall now feel happier, much happier; ten thousand thanks to you, Mr. Wyville, for all your generous kindness and forbearance—I can never forget it—never cease to pray God to bless you and to prosper you for it!"

She gave me her hand—I took it, and carried it to my lips; my own emotions choked my utterance, and as I hastily passed through the threshold, I heard her sobbing convulsively, as if her heart would break.

Noble, misguided Florence! May peace revisit thy bosom, and Time, the sole soother of all woe, teach thee to look upon the past with calmness and self-possession!

A few days afterwards brought me a

letter from the Admiral, commanding my return. He informed me that a friend and neighbour of mine at Mullikeen had made him an offer for the estate, but he should not proceed in the matter till he had consulted me. "As," concluded the Admiral, "you have devoted your time and energies to the improvement of the estate, I feel it only right, after deducting the mortgage and interest, to hand over the balance to you, which will exceed two thousand pounds."

This was gratifying intelligence, for it would place me in a position to take what steps I deemed best, to find out and to assist those who were already so dear to me.

In fact, in one short year, property in Ireland had so increased in value,

that those, who in the first instance had the courage to embark their money in land, soon found themselves able to realize from twenty to even eighty per cent. on their purchases. A little hedging, ditching, and draining—gates where wanted (which generally was everywhere), and a few necessary farm buildings, would put an entire new face upon a property, so that these superficial improvements would often double, and even sometimes quadruple the selling value of an estate.

When the time came, I bade adieu to Rathlynn with real regret—I had spent many happy days there, and the adventures I had gone through added much to the interest I felt in the place. Mrs. Doran and Nelly were left in charge of the house, and Dan

McBride looked after the land, and as for Larry, he had charge of that portion of the river which appertained to the estate. Mick Daly I recommended to Mr. Corrigan, who became in fact eventually the proprietor of the estate, which was the more valuable to him, as "the Mount" was also his, by foreclosure, on the flight and disappearance of the Fitzpatricks.

My friend Mrs. Connell was not forgotten. My sister had, at my request, selected and sent over many useful and ornamental articles, that could not be got in the remote west, and both the kind landlady and her pretty children were surprised and delighted with these tokens of our regard. I told Mrs. Connell of my accidental meeting with Florence—she laughed heartily, and said,

"This was arranged by Larry and Mrs. Bridget, I have no doubt, the principal parties knowing nothing of it. As Miss Donovan was gone, and it was pretty well known that your intimacy with her was at an end, Bridget, who is the universal match-maker of the country, thought it only right to bring you two together, hoping, and, indeed, not doubting, how it would end. As for Larry, he has always been for a match that would join Rathlynn to Mount Patrick."

I had pretty good evidence that in this respect Mrs. Connell was correct.

I made a visit to Ballybog the day before I left. It looked desolate and dreary, standing lone and solitary amid bogs and gloomy woods. I spent the whole morning in wandering around its precincts, and in visiting every spot

endeared to me by the recollection of some event connected with Mary Donovan. In her room I found her glove, which had probably been dropped in the hurry of her abduction. I placed it next my heart.

On my return down the Lake, I called to say adieu to the D'Arcies, and was pleased to hear that we should all soon meet in England.

Say what you will of the Irish, they are a warm-hearted people. Not only my own domestics and dependents, but also my neighbours at Rathlynn, and even my acquaintance in Mullikeen, gave me many gratifying tokens of their regard, and their sorrow at my leaving. I promised them, however, that I would be with them again ere long, and we parted with mutual regret and expressions of good will.

"A short reading this," said my uncle Rosse, "and a conclusion by no means satisfactory to the reader, though doubtless it will be so to the Admiral and myself. What on earth did you mean to do with that young 'peasant girl of Ballybog,' as that other young lady called her, if she had been cunning and selfish enough to listen to your proposals? You well know the Admiral would never have overlooked such a flagrant breach of discipline, and the estate would have been left to your sister, without her having the power to aid you as she would wish."

"My dear sir," said I, using my oft-repeated argument, "would you in your younger days have acted differently? There is a fate in these matters we

cannot, and perhaps ought not to resist."

"A fiddlestick, Frank! I don't believe a word of it. Men are ready enough to act like fools, and then lay the blame on fate. But as it is improbable you will ever meet this Queen of the Bogs again, I will say no more about it. She is a noble-hearted, fine-spirited girl, and had she been a Saxon instead of a Celt, or I suppose I must say a Milesian, and had she had a good pedigree, and the 'tocher' into the bargain, she might have suited very well. As for Miss Florence, there is too much thunder and lightning about her to please my taste—she had better have gone to the Grand Republic with her worthy father—there she would soon have been provided

for, and had a score of slaves to knock about when she felt so inclined."

"I don't think Florence was that kind of person, sir. Her manners and appearance were very striking, and she was in every respect superior to her family."

"Oh! yes, Frank, they were all angels, no doubt, these Irish girls, but permit me to say I am very glad, for your sake, that you have not brought either of those ladies over here."

I did not answer—I felt half-offended.

"As for your story, I have been very much interested with it, and I have to thank you for several very pleasant evenings. But then you must allow one felt anxious as the plot thickened,

and I expected every fresh chapter that the *d'nouement* would be an appeal to Uncle Rosse to smooth over matters with the Admiral. It is not however so, and as you have escaped both Scylla and Charybdis, I give you joy, and hail you as the first of the Wyville family who has graced the pedigree with the title of 'author.'"

CHAPTER X.

"Yet, in my dreams a form I view,
That thinks on me and loves me too;
I start, and when the vision's flown,
I weep that I am all alone!"

H. Kirke White.

Two years had elapsed since my visit to Penrhôs, and the communication of my adventures in the west to my worthy uncle. Soon after my return to England, the estate of Rathlynn was conveyed to Mr. Corrigan, and all my connection with Ireland seemed to cease.

I had received letters, both from Father Roche and from Mrs. Connell, but they gave me no information as to Mary Donovan, further than that she was well and on the eve of leaving for a distant country. What place she was leaving, and to what place she was going, there was no clue, and as she did not speak of writing again, I felt that all chance of my discovering her residence in these channels was gone.

My father, who was a martyr to the gout, and therefore frequently not in the most amiable mood, on my first arrival from Ireland insisted on my remaining with him, and then, after a few months, wondered at my leading so idle a life, and actually proposed my visiting foreign countries.

Eagerly did I embrace this proposition, and as I feared he might change his mind, not a moment was lost, and a few days found me in Paris. How far I rambled and what I saw, are foreign to this book; I need only state that the possibility of my meeting Mary never was absent from my mind, and that I frequented public places, and instituted perpetual inquiries, but without success. After traversing a great portion of Europe, I was seized with a longing desire to visit North America, and accordingly I landed in Halifax, Nova Scotia—traversed New Brunswick, visited various parts of Upper and Lower Canada, and descended the Hudson to New York. I had a strong feeling that "the peasant girl of Ballybog" was either in British America or

the States. But no—I heard nothing that could even give me the slightest clue, and so I was at last obliged to give up all hope of our ever meeting again.

Before, however, I left the great western continent, I took the precaution to request several parties to inquire and to keep a look out, and, if they met with or heard of the person I sought, to let me have immediate information.

I had not been long in England, when a letter was placed in my hands, from a gentleman at Toronto, in which he informed me that the lady I had so long been in quest of, and whose maiden name was Mary Donovan, was married to a wealthy English settler of the name of Bechamp, and now re-

sided at a beautiful place not far from the pretty town of Hamilton in Upper Canada.

The letter fell from my hands and I was thunderstruck. Surprise and indignation overcame me, and I tore the letter into a thousand pieces. Mary Donovan married! She who had owned a reciprocal affection—she who knew how dear, how very dear she was to me—she who had called me her preserver and her only friend—'Oh! shallow, changing woman!' Mary Donovan married, and so soon! and all my hopes for ever quenched! I know not how it may be with other people, but the pang this announcement caused me was severe beyond all expression; for some time I was fit for nothing—vain were all my attempts to be composed—I

felt the full truth of that saying of our great poet, "To be wise and love exceeds man's might."

Fortunately I was alone when this unexpected blow fell so heavy on me, nor did I venture among my friends till time and thought had somewhat tranquillized my feelings. When reason regained some of her power, I saw the matter in a somewhat different light, and much as I felt grieved, mortified, and disappointed, I could not with any justice blame Mary.

Had she not uniformly and steadily refused my proposals? Had she not declared that she would never enter any family where she was not to be received gladly, and as an equal? Had she on any one occasion given me direct hopes that she would be mine? Far from it—she

had practised an extent of self-denial which ought to have been followed by me, and I could not but own that, in the unchanged nature of my position, there was no plausible pretext for her relaxing from her determination. She was thrown upon the world, probably friendless and unprovided for. Was it either strange or unnatural that she should accept an offer of marriage, which would at once give her station and independence?

There was no controverting these arguments and facts, and I therefore felt I must trust to time to mitigate as it might the bitter pangs of disappointed affection. And yet I felt as if I could never love another—never meet with one like this poor peasant of the mountains—one who realized to my mind

all that was required in woman to make my life glide on in peace—the dear companion of my joys and woes! Do what I would, I could not shake off the remembrance of her my first and only love—her image ever pursued me, and often an involuntary pang shot across my heart when the scenes and circumstances of our meeting rose on the tablet of my memory.

It was in the spring, just before the opening of the gay season, that I was in London. As I have before said, two years had elapsed since I had left Rathlynn, and I now found myself comfortably installed in the house of my sister and her husband, Mr. D'Arcie, the Colonel's eldest son. My mischievous little friend, Susan D'Arcie, was also well married, and resided near her father's

place in Northamptonshire; but Fanny, who was also engaged to a cousin of our own, was an almost constant guest of my sister. The Colonel was in Ireland, but soon expected home; Mr. D'Arcie had a house in Park-lane, but he and his wife generally spent the shooting and hunting seasons in Northamptonshire.

We had dined early, with the intention of going to the first opera of the season, and as the evening was genial and warm, and the ruddy twilight still gloamed in the west, we sat at the bay window looking out into the park.

"I am so happy, Frank, to see you among us once again," said my sister; "and as the season is commencing, and promises to be a gay one, I trust you will not think of leaving us till

you join my father at the old place, which will not be before the beginning of August, you know?"

"It is not at all improbable that you may be troubled with me for a long time," said I, "for I have nothing else to do at present, and I must really rub up my aristocratic manners after wandering so long among the free and easy denizens of a Republic."

"Well, Frank, you will have all the world before you, and we all hope you will make good use of your time and present our dear father with a daughter-in-law such as he will approve. He expects your settling yourself."

"He does, and is somewhat peremptory in his injunctions on the subject," said I; "but I wrote and told him, that as I never intended to marry without his

consent, so it was only right that I should have my own also."

"Did the Admiral recommend any one, or he merely spoke generally?"

"Why do you ask, Eleanor?"

"Merely because he often speculates upon the probability of your soon marrying, and he sometimes even ventures to hint to me his wishes on the subject."

"And pray whom does he recommend?"

"Oh, several, but I think his favourite is Marian, our uncle Rosse's niece, because he says that she has every requisite—birth, accomplishments and fortune. She will, you know, succeed to the Penrhôs estate."

"I love Uncle Rosse right well," said I; "and no one can see his beautiful place in Wales and not admire and even

covet it, but as to this Miss Marian, I never saw her, nor do I feel any particular interest about her."

"Or any one else, I suppose? Oh, fie, Frank, I hoped you had more sense. Such indifference shows an unnatural state of mind."

"He was not always so indifferent," said Fanny D'Arcie, smiling; "if high birth, rare accomplishments, and large fortune have no charms for him *now*, we can, some of us, remember the time when he was more than satisfied with very inferior qualifications."

"Yes, indeed," said Robert D'Arcie, laughing; "when a pretty pair of eyes under a Milesian mantilla sent him scouring over the country, brandishing his shillelah and bidding defiance to the whole world."

I was silent. Well and kindly meant as these remarks were, they touched upon a chord which vibrated painfully to my heart, and roused a thousand sensations which were far from being as yet dormant. Fanny, with her usual quickness, perceived my embarrassment, and said quietly—

"Well, and I do not wonder; Mary Donovan was certainly one of the most fascinating persons I ever met with."

"What, the heroine of Ballybog?" exclaimed my sister, not half pleased. "I should think, Fanny, that a low young person like that could have no attractions for Frank Wyville."

"She had attractions for anybody and everybody," replied Fanny, warmly; "independent of her surpassing loveliness both of form and feature, there

was such a natural grace and sweetness of demeanour about her that you could not help loving her. I know that even your husband, Eleanor, was no little struck with her himself — confess, Robert!"

"She was certainly an admirable creature," said D'Arcie, "and had I not been wholly, solely, and entirely devoted to another, I really don't know——"

"Don't know what?" said his wife, putting her delicate little hand upon his mouth; "fie, fie, Robert! I will never believe that you could or would seriously admire a Miss Donovan of Ballybog."

"And pray why not?—her manners would not have disgraced, nay, would have adorned any station; they were easy, composed, and elegant, because they

were perfectly natural. I never saw her but once, but certainly I was much impressed in her favour."

"My dear mother was much taken with her," rejoined Fanny; "and I am sure, though we did not see much of her, both Susan and I felt towards her as if she was our sister. I never saw such eyes, and such beautiful hair, and her figure was perfect. It was quite a treat to see her walk those wild hills —so graceful, yet so firm, was her step."

I gave Fanny a look of gratitude.

"Where is this paragon of perfection now?" said my sister, with a somewhat anxious expression.

"I don't know," replied Fanny, looking at me; "but I think she is not in England."

"She is in Canada," said I, hastily, and half-choked as I uttered the words —"she is now Mrs. Bechamp, and resides with her husband near Hamilton."

My sister made no reply, for she was manifestly afraid of betraying the great pleasure and relief she experienced in this announcement.

"Mary Donovan married!" exclaimed both Fanny and her brother in one breath.

Their eyes were at once directed towards me, but I looked steadily on the ground.

"Well," said Fanny, recovering from her surprise, "I only hope she has married well. She certainly did not play her game adroitly, or she might, we all thought, have settled in England."

"You are right, Fanny, in your con-

jecture," said I, anxious to clear poor Mary from any misconception; "she might have settled in England, but her high feeling of honour and independence forbade it, and she left Ireland, without even the cognizance of those most interested about her."

"Was not she a noble-hearted girl?" exclaimed Fanny, triumphantly; "I wonder, Eleanor, whether you or I could have done the same in her position?"

"She was certainly an extraordinary person," said my sister, evading the question, "and I am truly rejoiced she is so well settled."

It was a few days after this conversation that I received a letter from my old friend and fellow-sportsman, Mr. Dignum.

"DEAR FRANK WYVILLE,

"How can you think of spending these precious months in that pest-house called London, where there is neither fish nor fresh air? We have had glorious sport, man, both in the river and the lake, but we missed you very much. That impudent vagabond Larry swears you can throw three yards against wind, now, further than I can, and hints that my hand is not so steady nor my arm so strong as it used to be; in fact the fellow means I am growing old. Well, old as I am, I gaffed a fresh fish weighing eighteen pounds seven ounces last Thursday, after playing the obstinate brute full three quarters of an hour. It was a very taking fly, and I send a specimen enclosed herein for your use. Larry took to trolling, aud a fine basket

of trout he brought home to our friend Mrs. Connell, the largest weighing six pounds and a half—the smallest a pound and three quarters. There had been a fresh in the streams up the mountains, and the fish were ready for anything. We tried the middle lake that day and kept under the Eagle's Cliff—not a better place, as you know right well. How can you be in London doing nothing, while the creatures are running up every tide for your amusement?

"I tell Mrs. Connell you are sure to come, and she keeps a room for you—for we are very full at the Hotel. We have a lot of Saxons here. It would amuse you to see how well they are rigged for the sport—books full of elegant and useless flies—rods about ten feet too short—lines only long enough to

catch gudgeons—egad! the devil a fish has any of them got yet, except a quiet old gentleman in a wig and spectacles, who can turn out a first-rate fly of his own making, and uses it, too, to some purpose. He brought in a fresh run fish this morning, weighing over twelve pounds! What do you think of that, my boy? His name is Greendrake, and he is a Yorkshireman.

"I have but little news. Parson Whiting, who lives down by the Earn Brook (no favourite of yours by-the-bye) is going to be married. He is, as you know, barely five feet two—his intended is nearly six feet—a monster of a woman! The little man must submit at once, or she'll make a chimney-piece ornament of him. She has a large mouth, fine teeth, and spakes the illigant brogue!

"We have heard that old Fitz and his son Archie are not doing well in Kentucky, and they are going to try their chance in Canada. Ryan is dead and gone. It will be queer if Master Archie should meet Mary Donovan that was—she is settled, they say, near Toronto. Wasn't she a jewel of a woman? She treated you rather scurvily—but sure the dear girl was right. You think so by this time, I dare say. Your other flame, Florence, is somewhere in the county of Cork. She was a fine creature, too, but had too much kick about her—she wanted a lesson or two from Rarey.

"I find the Corrigans good neighbours, and often go to Rathlynn to mix the punch for him. Julia is a dasher, and has half a dozen needy

Irish captains and lieutenants after her, but she knows what she is about. Young O'Toole made up to her, but she soon gave the poor silly sthrap his 'quiatus,' and 'put the scorn upon him' without mercy. She asked him 'Who it was that gave him the beating on Mullikeen Bridge, and what the Justices made him pay for giving the cowardly back-blow at a man who was fighting another?'

"Mrs. Connell is doing well, God bless her! And she is as deserving a woman as any in the west. The children are growing up around her, straight as arrows and blooming as roses, but they will never equal their mother. She sends her kind respects, and hopes to see you soon—so do

come. Good-bye—banacht lhat! My blessing to you!

"J. DIGNUM."

This characteristic epistle of my old friend half unsettled me. I had a violent longing to see those familiar scenes once more, and to visit those spots ever dear to me by pleasing yet melancholy associations. But on consideration I felt the imprudence of such a step—it would only revive feelings which it was now my duty as much as possible to suppress. I therefore wrote a long letter to the old sportsman, detailing all my proceedings, and inviting him, after the fishing season was closed, to join me at the Admiral's seat in town for the first burst with the hounds.

Meanwhile we plunged into all the gaieties of the London season. I met many of my old college intimates, and enlarged my acquaintance by many pleasant additions. I dined out much, and saw many beautiful and accomplished women, but they created no interest, they were mere pictures in my eyes. My sister was most industrious in praising the charms, mental and personal, of many of her young friends—but in vain. I lent a deaf ear, all I saw fell very far short, when compared with that poor and persecuted peasant girl who had first won my heart, and who still lived there, though I well knew she could never be mine.

I had been in town about a month, when, suddenly, the Admiral made his appearance and joined the family circle.

He came ostensibly to consult his physician, but I shrewdly suspected he felt interested in watching the proceedings of his son. If so, there was nothing for him to speculate upon, and I soon found that, from the account he had probably from my sister, he soon grew impatient and testy.

Though he frequently joined our parties he never saw me paying particular attention to any of the gay butterflies of the season, and though he took the trouble sometimes to point out the various recommendations of several of his favourites, yet he was annoyed to find there was no response on my side, and that all seemed alike indifferent to me.

My good father, with many virtues and really amiable qualities, was apt

to be impatient and unreasonable, and it was no part of his creed that sons had a right, when family interests were concerned, to think and act for themselves.

I was very much afraid of being summoned to a private interview, and by frequenting my Club more than usual, and occasionally quitting town for a few days, I hoped to escape being overhauled in true sailor fashion. But it was in vain. The more I avoided him the more did my father determine to bring me to, and so accordingly one morning after breakfast he fairly threw out his grappling irons and commenced the conflict.

"Now we are alone Frank, I wish to have a few words with you—I hope you are enjoying yourself in town, and at the same time making good use of your time and opportunities."

"I am enjoying myself certainly, sir, but as to the remainder of your query, I have really nothing to say, unless it be that I do not omit embracing every opportunity that promises me pleasure."

"Embracing!" repeated the Admiral angrily, "I don't wish you to be embracing anybody—it is time enough for that—but I do wish you would reflect that you are getting older every year, and that it is only reasonable for me to expect you will be thinking of soon settling yourself. What do you say to that, sir, eh?"

"I have nothing to say," I replied, "I am not inclined at present to marry, if it is that you mean by my settling myself."

"Of course I do mean that you should marry—what else could I mean?" It is

time I should know who is likely to inherit my estate."

"I hope, dear sir, I have not so far offended you as to make it necessary you should look out for another heir?"

"But I will though, Mr. Frank Wyville, if you intend to remain a bachelor—you don't mean to tell me, puppy, that you won't marry?"

"Not at present, sir; I have seen no one that I particularly admire. Surely you would not have me take such a serious step hastily, only to repent it at my leisure."

"Leisure! what business has any man to talk of leisure?—I never had any leisure in my whole life. Now, sir, to come to close quarters, as you are not able to choose for yourself, perhaps you will condescend to allow me to choose for you?"

"I am sure, my dear father, you are not serious in claiming a privilege that no independent man would grant. When I marry, it will be from affection, not from interest."

"By which you mean that if you fell in love with a tramp you would marry her in spite of your friends."

"I mean nothing of the sort, sir; not only will I never disgrace my family by a base connection, but I will never marry without your consent. Surely, you cannot expect more than this?"

"Why, that is mere evasion," and my father looked really angry. "You may very easily flatter me by asserting that you will not marry without my consent, when in fact you do not mean to marry at all. Now hear me, Frank,"

and the Admiral's voice trembled with emotion, "it has been conveyed to me that you have formed a low connection in Ireland—did you not give me your solemn promise that you would carefully abstain from three things? In two of these you have broken your word, and for anything I know in the third also. This species of delinquency is a new feature in our family—we have ever been proud of an honourable name."

"Nor, sir," replied I, indignantly, "has any conduct of mine tarnished it. I hope you know your son better. May I ask, sir from whom you derived your information?"

The Admiral produced a letter, and placed it in my hands. It was from McOwl, the poltroon justice of Mullikeen —the man whom I had once silenced, and

who I mentally determined should be silenced again. The letter was indorsed "confidential," but my father was too honourable to attempt any concealment. In this precious production, I was described as a common fighter and a brawler—as one who intermeddled in everybody's business — who had been brought before the magistrates for an aggravated assault on a mere boy, the son of a most respectable gentleman, the head of the ancient sept of O'Toole, and that I had formed an illicit connection with a low-born peasant girl, who had run away with another person.

This audacious piece of effrontery and cool impudence astonished me, though I well knew the despicable character of this personation of Irish

justice. I merely returned the letter to my father without remark.

"Well, sir," said he, looking me sternly in the face, "what do you say to this? The writer gives his name, and as a magistrate must be a man of position."

Still I gave no answer.

"Then," continued the Admiral, refolding the letter, and securing it in his pocket-book, "by your silence I am to conclude that these charges are correct?"

"I shall not condescend to waste one word upon such a production as that," said I, calmly, "and if you think your son, sir, could enact the part there described, I will not take any pains to disabuse your mind of the conviction."

My father looked perplexed, and fidgeted a good deal in his chair.

"And so that is all your answer?"

"I have nothing more to say, sir."

He threw himself back in his chair, and seemed to be considering the matter over in his own mind. At length he rose, and putting his hand on my shoulder, said in a milder tone than he usually used:—

"I believe I am wrong, Frank—I never knew you guilty of any ungentlemanly action—only answer me one question, and I shall be satisfied. What of this connection? Is that charge true, wholly or in part? I know young men are not always discreet."

"When I am treated as Admiral Wyville's son," said I, "there will neither be evasion nor concealment on my side, when my father seeks

for information. I do not deny, then, that circumstances of a very peculiar nature did throw me in the way of a young lady whom I greatly esteemed and admired, and shall ever continue to do so. I confess, also, that in a moment of excitement I offered her protection as my wife——"

"Which, of course, she at once accepted," said the Admiral, clenching his hand, and growing livid in the face with passion; "that is quite enough—I see it all—I will make my arrangements accordingly—I don't want to hear any more, sir—I have already heard that which, while it makes me wretched, will make you a beggar!"

He was about leaving the room, when I placed my hand on his arm, and said in a quiet tone:—

"At least, hear my sentence to its close—then, sir, you are at liberty to do what you please."

"I will always do what I please, as you shall find to your cost," said my father, angrily; "finish your sentence, for I wish to be gone. I have had enough of this folly and disobedience."

"I was just saying when you interrupted me, sir, that in a moment of excitement I offered to make that young lady my wife."

"Well, well," gasped the Admiral, "what then?"

"She refused, and left the country, without giving me the least clue to discover her. I have never seen her since."

My father, quite overcome with his emotions, sunk into his seat, nor did

he for some minutes continue the conversation.

"She must have been a noble-hearted girl," said he, at length, "and acted as a prudent woman naturally would. She must have known that she could never be received as my daughter, and therefore——"

"Her motives were as pure and as elevated as her character," interrupted I; "she was too proud to subject herself to insults, even for the man she loved."

"Then this affection was mutual?"

"I have good reasons to think it was."

"And therefore you only wait for an opportunity of marrying her? Now, mark me, Frank—I will never consent."

"I shall never ask your consent, sir."

"Oh, that is your game, is it? Now, I know why you refuse to settle yourself as your friends wish—you are waiting for this peasant girl."

"She is no peasant girl, sir—if she was, it would make no difference."

"Indeed!"

"No, sir—for one simple reason: she is married and settled."

My father started from his chair, took my hand cordially, and exclaimed—

"Then, Frank, you are free! Let us discuss this painful subject no more. I will only make you one proposition, and do not decide at once, but think upon it. Your uncle Rosse's niece Marian is a great favourite of mine. She is a hand-

some, clever, and accomplished young woman—she would grace any station. Remember, too, she is sole heir to Penrhôs, and all the accumulations, ranging over many years. She naturally looks for a high connection, and has already refused many most eligible offers; but lately Lord Augustus Lorrimer has been very attentive, and it is expected that he will shortly propose for her hand. He is handsome, steady, high-bred, and heir to a marquisate. But her uncle has different views, if they can be brought about. You are a great favourite with him—he loves you as if you were his own son; and though of course he would not have the subject broached to you, yet he is most anxious that you and Marian should be introduced to each other, and he has little doubt of the result. Now,

Frank, oblige me thus far—see her, and treat her with the intimacy of a friend and connection. You cannot be insensible to the great advantages of such an alliance: it is my wish—it is the wish of your sister and D'Arcie—it is the wish of Mr. Rosse himself; and if you proceed properly, I think I may augur that ere long it will be the wish of the lady herself."

"I thank you, sir," replied I, affected with the anxiety exhibited by my father, "for the deep interest you feel in my welfare. I will seek the friendship of Miss Rosse, and I will treat her as a sister. But as to making her my wife, or any other woman, I cannot. I cannot transfer my affections, as you would exchange one ship for another; as I promised not to marry against your

will, I really think it is all which a parent is entitled to ask."

"Very well, Frank," said my father, rising, and placing his hand on the handle of the door, "do as you please—you know my wishes—they are not unreasonable—only remember, that as you sow so will you reap." He slammed the door, and departed.

This was a painful interview. I thought the Admiral very peremptory and unjust, and I determined—come what would—not to be forced into an engagement with a young lady whom I had never known, and whom I at that moment had no wish even to see. I only hoped this Lord Augustus would prosecute his suit vigorously and successfully, and relieve me from a painful dilemma.

CHAPTER XI.

"There is a sickness which puts some of us in distemper, but I cannot name the disease."

Winter's Tale.

The season was now at its height, and every variety of amusement by day and by night, in the grand saloon or in the open air, wooed the gay votaries of pleasure. I plunged headlong into the fashionable *mêlée*, for I could not bear to be alone—I felt unhappy, uneasy, and dissatisfied. And yet I had no real enjoyment—the scenes that passed before

me caused no pleasurable excitement—my sister and Fanny D'Arcie almost voted me a bore and a cynic, for my only pleasure and employment was to quiz or to moralize upon the scenes before me, and act the critic and the philosopher in this Vanity Fair.

Often were the praises of Miss Rosse dinned into my ears—she was a magnificent performer on the harp and piano—she sang sweetly and in excellent taste—her ballad singing was perfection—so simple, so pathetic! She was perfectly Parisian in her French—then her manners were so natural and unaffected, &c., &c.

"We all wish her to join us here," said my sister, one morning, "but Uncle Rosse has not been very well, and she will not leave him for all the

gaieties and allurements of a town season. She is really a very good, affectionate girl, and would make a charming wife. We hear that Lord Augustus is very attentive, and at last her uncle has sanctioned his addresses. I suppose he has been told that you have no intention of settling yourself. You will repent it some day, Frank, take my word for it. Such women as Marian are not often to be met with."

"Probably not," I replied, "and I only wish that this Lord Augustus may bring matters to a close soon—I should then be bored no more about this 'charming woman.'"

My sister looked angrily at me, and added,

"I think you were very ungrateful,

Frank, not to go down to Penrhôs the other day, when you were so cordially invited; surely it could do you no harm to be introduced to one who is, in fact, a connection of our own. Our uncle Rosse particularly wished it, and was much hurt at your refusal."

"To tell you the truth, Eleanor," said I, "I have no heart just now for anything—I love my uncle Rosse, and I have no doubt, when we meet, I shall feel as a brother to his niece. But the very fact of my father urging me to pay my addresses to this young lady, and threatening me if I do not, and Mr. Rosse's kind but vain wish I should do the same, deter me from placing myself in a situation most awkward and disagreeable both to Miss Rosse and myself."

"Well, Frank, I am heartily tired of this romantic attachment to a mere country girl of questionable parentage. Take Celia's advice to Rosaline:—'Come, come, wrestle with thy affections. The worst fault you have is to be in love.'"

"And I will answer, sister, in Orlando's words, 'Tis a fault I would not exchange for your best virtue.'"

"'Alas! love is but madness,' as the great bard says; therefore, Frank, let us drop the subject. Argument and persuasion only make things worse. When you might make us all happy, and ensure your own happiness also, you blindly and madly refuse, though the object of your affection is lost to you for ever."

"But will not my uncle Rosse

prefer a lord for his niece to a mere dependent commoner like myself? This young nobleman seems to be urging a successful suit."

"We have just heard," said my sister, "that she has peremptorily refused him. It is very foolish of her, for he was a splendid match, and desirable in every respect."

A few days afterwards we received an invitation to a select *soirée* at Lady Ashcroft's, and it was duly notified that all the guests were to be in masquerade dress, and not to remove their masks till they sat down to supper. A great deal of smart conversation was anticipated, as several men of great wit and talent had promised to be there. There was great whispering and closeting among the ladies.

as to what costumes they should adopt, and they took care not to let me into the secret.

For my own part I was determined not to trouble myself much about the matter, and accordingly I enacted the Irish sportsman, with my hat ornamented with a dozen of my best salmon-flies, and with a "pea green jacket" and fishing boots, and a huge shillelah in my hand, I, too, kept my own secret, and declining to accompany the party, went to her ladyship's house at Twickenham in a cab.

It was a very pretty and a very striking scene. The house stood not far from the silver Thames, and was surrounded on every side with thick shrubberies and plantations, affording a variety of beautiful walks. Seats were judiciously

placed in pleasant spots, and many an arbour now redolent with the sweet flowers of spring invited the passers-by to repose. The moon was at its full, and the masses of silvery light piercing into the shady recesses gave a magic and enchanting effect to the whole scene.

After partaking of coffee, &c., the parties divided—some rambled over the grounds in pairs—some occupied the seats enjoying the soft western breeze, while others crowded the saloons and engaged in the dance.

Among the company I had observed a lady in the Irish costume, the blue mantilla cloak partly covering a dress of rich golden coloured poplin. The cloak, as usual, covered the head, and fell in graceful folds almost as far as the knees. I strongly suspected this was Fanny

D'Arcie, for she was taller and thinner than her sister Susan, and if it was her, she acted her part with characteristic gravity and decorum.

Well knowing that this costume was aimed at me, and that it was supposed I should not be able to withstand the attraction, I kept aloof till the gentleman who acted as a kind of Master of the Ceremonies, approaching me, said, "As there are but two inhabitants of the sister isle among us, sir, I think you ought to be acquainted, and I beg I may be allowed to introduce you to the fair Milesian as her partner in the next quadrille."

I could not of course refuse, and soon I found myself standing side by side with a lady, the perfection of whose figure made me anxious to see her face.

We danced together, but the lady did not appear anxious to converse—she was nervous and timid. If this is Fanny D'Arcie, thought I, she has been admirably made up for the occasion, and plays her part gracefully and well.

At length the dance was over, and I proposed sitting down, but the lady took my arm and preferred a walk.

"Fair lady," said I, breaking in upon a somewhat awkward silence, "from what part of Hibernia do you come—am I to designate you Celt or Milesian?"

"As you please," she replied; "but is it possible you can feel any interest in that green isle of the western seas?"

"Interest!" replied I, warmly; "I love the country as if it were my own—I spent there a short time most happily, but——"

"But what?" she interrupted, quickly. "Did you find Erin's daughters as fickle as they are fair?"

"Not fickle, but obdurate," replied I, sighing; "a fair bosom may hide a heart of stone. I found it so."

"You are surely wrong—I knew her—she was beautiful and interesting. I have been told she is happy in your affection, and replaced one who once had your love, but who seemed not to value it. Am I a prophetess like your friend Bridget Cooney?"

I started. Who could this be?—it *was* Fanny D'Arcie—it could be no one else; yet the voice was either feigned or not similar.

"You are a false prophetess then," said I; "she who, as you say, had once my love and seemed not to value it, has

never been replaced and never will—I see you know my history."

"Almost as well as you do yourself," replied she; "but can you deny," and she lowered her voice, "that the dark-eyed maiden of Mount Patrick is now on the ascendant, and pledged to be your guiding star through life?"

"Deny! I more than deny it—I scorn the very idea—who and what are you that would thus probe my feelings? And by what authority, or for what purpose, do you so strangely address me?"

"By no authority and for no particular purpose—we are natives of the same country—I merely wish to prove that I know Mr. Frank Wyville through his very appropriate disguise, and so farewell."

She darted off, and I saw her join

Lady Ashcroft, by whom she was conducted to the music-room. I followed and saw her graceful figure bending over the harp, and her fingers rapidly coursing over the strings. A crowd gathered round as if in the expectation of a great treat, and accompanying herself she sang with touching pathos and simplicity those beautiful words of Moore's—

"I saw from the beach, when the morning was shining,
A bark o'er the waters move gloriously on;
I came when the sun o'er that beach was declining,
The bark was still there, but the waters were gone.

"Ah! such was the fate of our life's early promise,
So passing the spring-tide of joy we have known,
Each wave that we danced on at morning ebbs from us,
And leaves us at eve on the bleak shore alone."

She ceased—for a moment all were silent as if entranced, and then ensued a thunder of applause. Gracefully acknowledging the compliment, she rose, and

taking the arm of her hostess left the room.

I stood transfixed. My brain was in a whirl—was this a piece of humanity, or an angel dropped from the clouds? And she knew *me!* How was that? I had certainly never seen her. And to accuse me of being engaged to Florence Fitzpatrick! Who could have put such an idea into her head, and what could be her motive in asking? And then the song—so exactly according with my own feelings! Was it mere accident or design that guided the strange selection? I stood bewildered—others took possession of the harp and piano, but I heard them not. The song—the conversation—the dress!—the more I thought upon it, the more did I feel convinced that there was some

plot, and that my sister and Fanny were at the bottom of it. How was I to unravel the mystery?

But, luckily, mysteries often unravel themselves. Entering the room with the Admiral, I saw my uncle Rosse. A bright thought flitted across my brain —this lady was no other than my so-called cousin Marion, and the whole was a contrivance to throw us together. I saw it all, and I resolved to defeat a plan so clumsily designed, though I could not but confess it was cleverly executed.

Mr. Rosse saw me, and approaching, shook me cordially by the hand—the Admiral looked as if he could have hoisted me up on the yard-arm. He turned suddenly away, and left me with Uncle Rosse.

"And so, Frank," said he, "you would not come down to Penrhôs; it was not kind of you, but I suppose, since your return from Ireland, you have been rather out of sorts, so at least your sister writes to my niece."

"Is Miss Rosse with you, sir? Is she here to night?"

"Questions, Frank, I am not disposed to answer, seeing that you absolutely declined being introduced to one whom I may almost call your cousin."

"My dear sir," replied I, feeling ashamed of the truth of the reproach, "I—I——"

"Say no more," said my uncle Rosse, "I can well conjecture how it is. You know I am in your secret—Florence Fitzpatrick and Mary Donovan are well known personages to me; as Mary is

married, we suppose that all these low spirits are about that dark-eyed Milesian, and that knowing your father's unconquerable objection to such a match, you are absolutely 'kilt,' as the Irish say, between love and despair."

"My dear uncle Rosse," said I, warmly, "who could have put such an idea into your head? I never spoke of love to poor Florence, and she is as far removed from me as Mary Donovan. To you who know my history so well, I may in confidence confess that Mary's disappearance, her rejection of my suit, and her subsequent marriage, have had a great effect on me. I loved her with all the ardour of a first passion, and it will, I feel, be years before these strong impressions are removed. It may be foolish, but I cannot help it."

"For a sensible man, Frank, your attachment to this 'maid of Ballybog' is really marvellous—I daresay she was very pretty—fine eyes—small foot and ankle, graceful, and all that, but really I must say she was no matrimonial match for the son and heir of Admiral Wyville. We had carved out better things for you, but if you will persist in loving and admiring a woman of inferior rank, and one who, as you say, can never be yours, why, we cannot help it—we can only wish it had been different."

I made no reply, and as the Admiral at this moment entered the room, and beckoned to Mr. Rosse, I again found myself alone.

Was ever anything so perplexing—so foolish? Here was I offending all my

best friends—keeping aloof from the world around me—making myself ridiculous, and for what? In reality for nothing at all—for all my repining, all my regrets—all my isolation of myself, could not restore the object of my affection—she was now the property of another, and I had no right to think more about her. And why, situated as I now was, why could I not approach Miss Rosse more cordially—seek her intimacy, possibly be able to replace her I had lost by one, a union with whom, if it could be effected, would at once be gratifying to my family, and bring extraordinary advantages to myself? That Miss Rosse was beautiful, I was sure—my sister had told me so; that she was more than usually accomplished, I had had certain proof.

Was it not sheer folly to lose the substance, when in truth there was not even a shadow to grasp at?

All these arguments passed rapidly through my mind, as I stood by myself, leaning against the architrave of one of the windows. But the figure of my "mountain maid" passed before my eyes, and I felt that I would not barter her natural graces for all the refinements and accomplishments of a higher station, and as to the consideration of fortune—

> "My love more noble than a world,
> Prizes not quantity of dirty lands,
> 'Tis that miracle and queen of gems,
> That Nature pranks her in, attracts my soul."

Just so, as our immortal bard writes, he who read, as never mere man before had read, the inmost workings of the human heart. No—it was of

no avail, I felt as if I could not love another—my very soul recoiled from the attempt, and the very wish of my friends that I should woo, and if possible win my fair cousin, rather injured the cause they had so much at heart. Not one chord in my composition at this moment vibrated in her favour. But then arose another consideration—Was it right to keep aloof from an amiable and accomplished girl, who, as a connection of my family, and the adopted heiress of a kind and esteemed relative, had every claim upon my attention? On consideration I felt my error, and even if there had been a kind of family cabal to bring us together, it was unmanly in me to be repulsive, or to show indifference when there was an evident

wish that I should exhibit more than common cordiality.

I started from my reverie—I determined to have more command over my feelings, and accordingly left the room in pursuit of my late partner in the dance, and whom I had great reason to believe—indeed, whom I now knew—to be Miss Rosse. I should have liked her better certainly had she adopted another costume, but that I fancied to be a ruse of my sister's, in order as she probably thought to attract my attention. Of the real meaning of adopting such a costume, I felt sure Miss Rosse had not the slightest conception. It was very pretty, and was admirably suited both to set off the figure and conceal the countenance of the wearer.

My search for my fair partner was unsuccessful. In vain did I perambulate every room—in vain did I scour each mazy walk and shady vista of the extensive grounds—the blue mantilla was nowhere to be seen. My uncle Rosse, where was he? Invisible; my father alone stalked through the gay throng, with a countenance serious and discomfited, yet endeavouring as well as he could to answer the greetings and mingle in the small talk of the various circles he encountered. To apply to him I felt was useless, so I endeavoured to discover my sister or Fanny D'Arcie among the many gay masks by whom I was surrounded. This, however, I could not do—so well was the identity of persons concealed by the many and strange costumes they had adopted.

At supper, however, when all were unmasked, I had no difficulty in seating myself next to Fanny D'Arcie, and I requested her to inform me who was my partner in the quadrille, and why she had so suddenly disappeared.

"The first question," she replied, "I will not answer, and the second I cannot with any certainty; but I believe the lady in the blue cloak had no wish to remain longer, and so went away—possibly she had some other engagement."

"I know," said I, "that the lady was Miss Rosse—did my uncle leave at the same time?"

"If the lady was, as you suppose, Miss Rosse, it is not probable she would go away by herself."

I saw nothing was to be gained by

questioning, and so I held my tongue.

Before, however, we left the supper-table, Fanny said to me somewhat earnestly—

"I think, Frank, you are acting absurdly. Why cannot you be natural? So far from Marian Rosse being ready to jump into your arms, as you seem to fear, I can tell you that she absolutely avoids you."

"I own, Fanny, that I have been very foolish, but my friends should make allowances. What would you have me to do? I will follow your advice — it is always judicious and kind."

Fanny bowed low at the compliment.

"If you take my advice," replied she, "you will forget Rathlynn, and all that happened there. You will also go

down to Penrhôs when the family are assembled, and when there, be the natural and lively character you used to be when we knew you at Doonore."

"Thank you," said I, "your advice shall be taken. But where is my uncle Rosse now?"

"He is visiting an old friend near Dorking in Surrey, but he returns home in a week, and Marian with him."

CHAPTER XII.

"There's up into a pleasant glen,
A wee piece frae my father's tower,
A canny, saft, and flowery den,
Which circling birds has formed a bower."
Allan Ramsay.

It was one of the loveliest May mornings that ever I remember, that I found myself once more standing before the outer gate that guarded the entrance to the old mansion of Penrhôs. The air was fresh and balmy, a gentle shower had recently fallen, and every leaf and flower, and every blade of

grass, glistened in the warm sunbeam, and seemed to rejoice under its refreshing influence.

"What a lovely world it has pleased God to place us in did we but know it!" I exclaimed, as I cast my eyes on the scene around. As the sweet poet of Olney sings—

> "The sight is pleased,
> The scent regaled, each odoriferous leaf,
> Each opening blossom, freely breathes abroad
> Its gratitude, and thanks Him with its sweets."

Travellers may praise other climes, and, drawing comparisons, may disparage our own country, but I know nothing (and I have travelled much) to compare with a soft genial spring morning in dear Old England. Where do the flowers look gayer?—where do they scent the air more delicately?—where are they found in greater variety?

And then the birds! In no part of the world is such a sweet and varied chorus raised to the Creator's praise—nowhere is the soul of man so cheered and charmed by Nature's melody.

I felt all this as I stood at the gate looking up the road, as it ascended the hill through a wild wood of oaks, each bank besprent with primroses, violets, and daisies, while overhead was a canopy of the softest and brightest green, formed by the opening leaves still tender and only half developed. A thousand drops, shining like diamonds, hung on the branches, which, every now and then, stirred by a passing zephyr as it played aloft, fell in a gentle shower upon the path.

"Ah," thought I, "who would linger in the smoky city while Nature in-

vites to us wander among such scenes as these" !

I opened the gate and passed on. I have already described the approach to Penrhôs. I know not how it was, but I loitered on my way. I stooped to cull many a little flower that half hid its beauty in the thick moss or growing grass. I gazed upon the oaks and marked the young foliage expanding under the genial warmth of the sun. I sat down on the flowery bank and listened with delight to the glorious chorus of birds above me. In fact, it was pure enjoyment, and sympathy alone was wanting to make my happiness complete.

Suddenly the joyous and distant bark of a dog among the rocks above awoke me from my reverie, and I conjectured

that some of the family must be in the grounds. I knew that to the left of the road, and not far from the house, there was a narrow and picturesque valley or glen, that ran up into the mountain, terminating in an almost perpendicular ascent, from the bottom of which bubbled out a clear and plenteous stream. This, increasing from other neighbouring springs, leaped joyously down the vale, here encircling the base of a grey rock, there throwing itself over an opposing ledge, and scooping out a deep basin where it boiled and eddied like a thing of life!

It was from this spot the noise proceeded, but all was now silent, and I paused to consider whether I might with propriety alter my course and approach the house that way. I knew every turn

and every nook in the domain, and at once deciding to visit the glen, which was ever a favourite resort of mine, I bounded lightly up the rocks, gained the summit, descended the other side, nor stopped till I stood by the brook where it almost buried itself among a thicket of dark hollies and alders.

I had not stood there long ere two spaniels bounded towards me, and I soon recognized the former companions of many a day's sport. They at once knew me, and greeted me with a warmth and a sincerity not often found among my fellow-men.

"Surely," thought I, "my fair cousin Marian cannot be far off, for she alone would be allowed the privilege of taking these favourites out." They were my uncle Rosse's constant companions both in the house and in the field.

A smooth green knoll round which the brook circled was before me, and concealed a portion of the valley from my view. I hastily mounted it, and from the summit commanded the narrow glen to its termination. At the foot of this knoll, where the brook rushed wildly through a fissure in the rock, and then spread itself calmly on a more even surface, was a favourite resort of mine even in my boyish days, and I had long ago erected there a rustic seat close to the water's edge and overshadowed by a gnarled and stunted oak. Here I was wont to bring some favourite author on a hot summer's day, and reclining in the shade, listen to the soothing music of the waters as they hurried by—

> "And 'neath the shade of melancholy boughs,
> Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time."

Looking from the summit of the knoll which I had now gained, I was startled by observing a female figure standing near this seat and gazing intently upon the passing stream. Judging from her size and figure, and the richness of her costume, I fancied I recognized my partner in the dance, and certainly this could be no other than Marian Rosse. Who else, indeed, could it be? What was to be done? Should I at once introduce myself to her, or should I quietly make my way to the house and await her arrival there? But I had no time to determine —she turned round suddenly, and uttered an exclamation of surprise on seeing a stranger so near in this solitary place. But on the first glance I stood transfixed —riveted to the spot! I gazed, and gazed again—I rubbed my eyes, perchance some

glimmering had deceived me—or it was some fantasy of the brain—but no, there she stood in all her exquisite loveliness of form and feature—there stood Mary Donovan, or her spirit!

With a hesitating step, and with a countenance flushed with emotion, she slowly approached me. I sprung forward, and in the excitement of the moment would have folded her in my arms. But she stepped back, and offering her hand cordially, I snatched it to my lips—

"Mary, dear Mary!" I exclaimed; "what mystery is this? How are you here? Where do you come from?—who are you? Are you still my own Mary Donovan, that I so dearly loved, but so vainly wooed?"

"I am, and I am not," replied she,

smiling. "My name is no longer Mary Donovan, and yet I am the Mary Donovan you once saved from death and dishonour, and who still owes a vast debt of gratitude. Oh, Mr. Wyville! it is indeed long since we met!"

"Long!" I exclaimed; "it is an age —an age of misery to me, for I heard you were settled in the far, far west, and lost to me for ever!"

"I have not left England since we parted," said she, "and I, too, never expected to see you again. In parting from you so abruptly, I only did what I knew was right, and I could not blame you when I was informed, from good authority, that you had renewed your intimacy with Miss Florence Fitzpatrick."

"And who was your authority for

so absurd a fiction? I never gave Florence, on any occasion, the slightest reason to suppose I was her lover. No, Mary, I never loved but one, and the name of that one I need not repeat to *you*."

"Fanny D'Arcie," replied she, blushing, "had a letter from Julia Corrigan, in which she asserted, on the authority of Larry Lanigan and Mrs. Cooney herself, that you were in the habit, after I left, of meeting Miss Fitzpatrick in the cabin, and that, as soon as the Admiral's consent could be obtained, you were to marry her."

"Then this scandalous misrepresentation," said I, "clears up much that was unaccountable in the manner and feelings of my father, of Mr. Rosse, and of my other friends towards me, not ex-

cepting, I presume, the *ci-devant* Mary Donovan. And pray by what name and style am I now to address you, since you are neither Mary Donovan nor yet Mrs. Bechamp, of Hamilton, in the Western States of Canada?"

"I am Marian Rosse, niece to Mr. Rosse, of Penrhôs, my late father being his only brother."

"Impossible!—that is to say, how can it be that you, a mere mountain peasant girl from the wilds of Donegal, can in so short a time as two years be metamorphosed into the high-bred, the accomplished Marian Rosse, the admiration of the *beau monde*, and one of the brightest stars of a London season?"

"I am not deserving of these extravagant epithets," said Marian, again blushing; "but what opportunity had I at

Ballybog to exhibit my accomplishments, if I had any? But let us enter the house—I know my uncle expects you. This is scarcely the place for mutual explanations."

Mary was right. The joy of this unexpected meeting wholly engrossed me. It was long before I could realize to myself my actual position, and when I looked upon the elegant, fashionably attired, high-born, and high-bred lady before me, I could scarcely identify in her the humble, anxious, persecuted maid of Ballybog. But it was so, and not the least of my emotions of delight was to perceive that there was a reason why she had rejected all the great proposals that had been made to her; in fact, that the very report of my engagement to Florence had produced no present change

in her long-cherished feelings towards me.

When we arrived at the house, we were met at the door by old Howell the butler.

"Cot pless my bones! Master Frank, and is it you? Surely his worship, my good master, will be pleased to see you. When did you come down from London, and why did not you let us know, that the trap might have been sent to meet you?"

"You know, Howell," said I, "that I always walk."

"Ea shure—ea shure," said the old man, rubbing his hands with delight, "that was always your way from boy little. But come in and taste the cwrw dda after your walk, and there's a venison pasty on the sideboard. Cot pless us!" added the kind old man, eyeing me over, as was his usual custom when I

arrived, "how tall you grow! And here's Miss Marian, too, with a cheek blushing like a rose-bud—she was pale enough when she came to Penrhôs. And by the look of you, you must be acquainted—Cot pless us! wonders never cease! Master is in the study," continued Howell, ushering us forward, "won't he be glad to see you, Master Frank!"

Was there ever so happy a man as I was? Yes, I think my kind uncle Rosse was equally so. All his wishes were about to be realized, and in my long and ardent and tried attachment to his niece, he found an accession of delight he could not attempt to express. He often silently joined our hands, and blessed Heaven it was even so. And yet there were moments when I doubted the reality of my good fortune. Mary

Donovan, the peasant girl of Ballybog—the fair maid of the wilds of Donegal—the rejected of my friends—the persecuted and seemingly friendless orphan—now the adopted child of one of my own nearest and dearest friends—the heiress to a fine estate, and the sole representative of an ancient and honourable race! Was it a reality or a vision?

From Marian's explanations, I gathered the following facts, which will at once elucidate the mystery that so long appeared to involve her. Her father, it seems, in early life had given himself up to scientific pursuits, and like many men of genius had but a small share of discretion;—some of his projects had turned out well, till the ardent study of mineralogy induced him to try his fortunes in British America. There he fell in love

with and married a beautiful and amiable woman, of good family, and some fortune, and a Roman Catholic. Success not attending his efforts, he returned to Europe, and with his wife and only child, now about twelve years old, took up his residence in Paris.

His wife, who was a person of great prudence and virtue, unfortunately died, leaving the husband deprived of that gentle but not less powerful influence which had for so many years kept him in the right path. At this time Marian was seventeen years old, and had possessed the advantage of maternal care and superintendence at that period when she most needed them. Her mother had brought her up and educated her with a view to those privations and disappointments she was too well aware

Marian must have to endure, if it pleased the Almighty to remove her, an event she felt was probable from the delicacy of her constitution. Everything was done that could strengthen her mind, and implant good principles in her heart; at the same time she was thoroughly taught those mental and personal accomplishments which would be useful to her in after life, and place her above want and destitution.

After Mrs. Rosse's death all went wrong—divers speculations were entered into and failed—her fortune was lost, till at length a company with which Mr. George Rosse was connected, was broken up under most disgraceful circumstances, and the burden of liabilities was thrown upon him, the only one who was innocent of any complicity in their mal-practices.

Nothing but speedy flight remained to the now broken-hearted old man, and by the advice of Father Roche (who was fortunately in Paris) he escaped with difficulty, changed his name to Donovan, and with his daughter sought an asylum amid the fastnesses of Rathlynn.

Soon after their arrival there, Archibald Fitzpatrick, struck by the beauty of Mary Donovan, contrived, by bribing Thady Houligan, to gain possession of certain of Mr. Donovan's papers, and by this disgraceful expedient discovered thus much of their secret, that they were living under a feigned name and had reason to dread exposure.

How this villain worked upon Mary's fears we have already seen, but when alarmed at the threats of Florence, and from fear of the Corrigans, he was about to relinquish the pursuit, he further dis-

covered from letters placed in his hands by Houligan, that the pretended Mr. Donovan was the only brother of a rich Welsh squire, and that Mary was his next of kin, and probable heiress of his large possessions.

This discovery he communicated to Florence, and also to his father, and the consequence was the bold plot which was so signally foiled, and which finally proved the ruin of the perpetrators. The fact of a Mary Donovan being married and settled in Canada, was simply one of those coincidences which will surprise nobody.

In addition to this account, I was informed by my uncle Rosse that his brother was most difficult to advise or persuade, that offers of service were seldom noticed, and that even in his retreat at Ballybog,

when almost destitute of resources, he was too proud to solicit any aid, but had caused it to be reported that he had died in America, which of course prevented any further effort on the part of his friends to discover him.

In fact, for a period of twenty years, he had entirely alienated himself from his family, and never communicated either the fact of his marriage, or the birth of his child. But before his death, he had written in trictest confidence to his brother's solicitor declaring the existence of his daughter and only child, and begging him, in the event of his death, to look to her interests. This Mr. Fairburn—an honourable man—did, and at once; he sent a person upon whom he could depend, to conduct the fair orphan to the shelter of his own roof, until he had collected all the legal proofs of her parent-

age, and was in a condition to present them and his niece to Mr. Rosse.

"My joy in thus recovering the only child of a brother I had always loved notwithstanding his follies, and eccentricities," said my uncle Rosse, one day, "you may readily conceive, Frank; but —when I saw *her*, my gratitude to Heaven knew no bounds. She is the delight, as she will prove the support of my declining years, and little did I think, while condemning your attachment to the poor orphan girl, that she was my own niece and the sole representative of our ancient house."

Marian was present when my uncle Rosse thus expressed himself, and after a pause he suddenly turned to her, and with a grave shake of his head, resumed:—

"But how was it, hussy, that you never yourself told me the history of your retirement at Ballybog, and of your intimacy with Frank Wyville?"

"As to the first part of your question, my dear uncle," said she, "it was by the advice of Mr. Fairburn that I concealed those facts. He thought it would give you unnecessary pain, were you informed of my father's state of destitution, and the melancholy circumstances attending his death; and secondly, with regard to my knowledge of the young gentleman you mention, it was, you will allow, a secret which a lady is fully justified in keeping to herself."

"Well, well, be it so," said Mr Rosse, "but nevertheless, it would have saved both you and myself, and poor

Frank also, much tribulation, had all these circumstances been known some time ago. Surely, there could not have been two more unhappy creatures than you and Frank!"

"For my part," said I, looking fondly at Marian, "I do not regret that matters were so. It enabled both of us to prove the real depth of our attachment, and then the joy of the recognition was so exquisite, that it would amply have repaid years of misery."

Marian smiled her assent through her tears, and all was now one scene of general happiness and mutual congratulation.

I wrote to our friends Mrs. Connell and Mr. Dignum, to announce the joyful tidings, and from the latter received one of his characteristic letters, in

which he treated the subject in his usual style. Mrs. Connell wrote as she always acted, sensibly, delicately, kindly, and both Marian and I resolved that she should be a guest at Penrhôs, whenever she could prevail on Mr. Dignum to escort her. To those who show sympathy and kindness when we are under the pressure of misfortune, a special debt of gratitude is due, but alas ! it is not always paid.

To the whole family the union of the two friendly houses was a matter of general congratulation, for I need scarcely inform the reader, that though the poor and dependent Mary Donovan declined the alliance, I had met with no serious obstacles when (as I jocularly told the Admiral), in "obedience to his orders," I offered my

hand and heart to the rich and gifted Marian Rosse.

"Almost from the first, dear Frank," said she, one day, when we were rambling together in the mountain glen, "my too susceptible heart was yours. I loved the generous openness and candour of your nature, and I felt the most perfect confidence in the purity of your motives. You may judge then, of what I suffered, when I perceived that the disparity of our fortunes would prove an impassable barrier to our union; and the suspicion, too, that Florence Fitzpatrick was the first object of your affection, did not remove the sting. When Thady Houligan told me that you had brought her up the lake in your boat, alone, and conveyed her back again to the Mount,

my eyes were at once opened to the real state of my feelings. Poor Florence! from my heart I forgive her! I know too well myself the pangs of disappointed affection, not to sink all emotions of anger in sincere commiseration."

"But I am anxious to know, Marian," said I, "how it was, at your interview on the Lough with Archibald Fitzpatrick, that he fell into the water? Did you punish his audacity by pushing him in?"

"Oh no! replied she, with a half reproachful look, "how could you think me capable of such a thing? In stepping back, heedless, I suppose, of where he stood, in the excitement of the moment, he lost his footing, and plunged overhead into the Lake. I was much alarmed, but as I saw he

could gain the shore again with ease, I hastened homewards."

"Yet another question, Marian—was it not cruel to set Bruno at me? I only escaped his huge jaws by a flying leap, and a rapid descent into the soft bog."

"Poor Bruno! He was a noble dog, but his power of inflicting injury was gone. He had not a tooth in his head. You are not the only intruder he scared away in a similar manner. He proved a safer guard than Thady Houligan."

Once more my uncle Rosse occupied his arm-chair in the well-known study, and I sat opposite to him, as on the memorable evenings when I read my manuscript.

"Who would have thought, Frank," said he, after a long silence, and pointing with his meerschaum to a beautiful portrait of his niece, which now occupied a panel in the ancient oak chimney-piece, "who would have thought that all the time you were praising Mary Donovan, and making me tremble lest you should take some rash step,—that poor 'mountain maid,'—whose influence we all so much dreaded, was no other than my own dear niece! Really, the whole thing is marvellous! She showed herself a good, noble-hearted girl, Frank, and so I always thought her, at the very time I was wishing her in the backwoods of Canada."

"And I know not how it was, my dear uncle Rosse," said I, "but from the first monent I beheld Mary Donovan, even at the very time she set Bruno upon

me, and made me run for my life, my heart was drawn towards her by a kind of inscrutable impulse, and during the whole of our intercourse, while she remained at Ballybog, I felt as if she had a claim of some kind upon my protection."

"And well, my dear boy," said Mr. Rosse, rising, and taking my hand, "well and nobly, and generously, did you obey the impulse. You saved my poor dear child from that reckless villain, and in restoring her to my arms, pure and unsullied, have conferred upon us both an obligation——"

"Which," said I, interrupting him, "you have more than amply repaid, by giving me the only possession I coveted on earth."

"Well, well, Frank, that is kindly said. There are two circumstances that give

me unbounded satisfaction; first, that you have proved right nobly that you loved Marian for herself alone—and secondly, that I am about to bestow her upon the only man in the world I think worthy of her. It is a case indeed, on both sides, of virtue and constancy rewarded. I am proud of Marian's discretion and firmness, of her tenderness and devotion as a daughter, and of her self-denial under strong temptation. I am equally proud, Frank, of your manly protection of a poor, persecuted girl, of the purity of your motives, and the sound judgment that directed your actions. May the blessing of the Almighty attend you both! It has been indeed a strange history, but the moral is good. You shall read it over again when Marian is present, for we can now better un-

derstand and appreciate the full bearing and importance of all you both did and suffered in the Wilds of Donegal."

THE END.

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